Two Flowers for the Dragon

Nari Kusakawa

4

Series named to YALSA'S 2008 Great Graphic Novels for Teens list.

Lucien's memories finally return!

[illegible] tattoo [illegible] Kuwan has expanded to fill Shakuya's arm! Since neither Kuwan nor the princess are the type to kiss and tell, the handmaids are left to wonder why the princess' gloves keep getting longer and what is being hidden underneath. Meanwhile, Lucien begins to remember details of what happened five years earlier and has a truly shocking revelation. When he shares his memories with Shakuya, she isn't sure how to feel anymore.

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TEEN

ROMANCE/COMEDY/FANTASY

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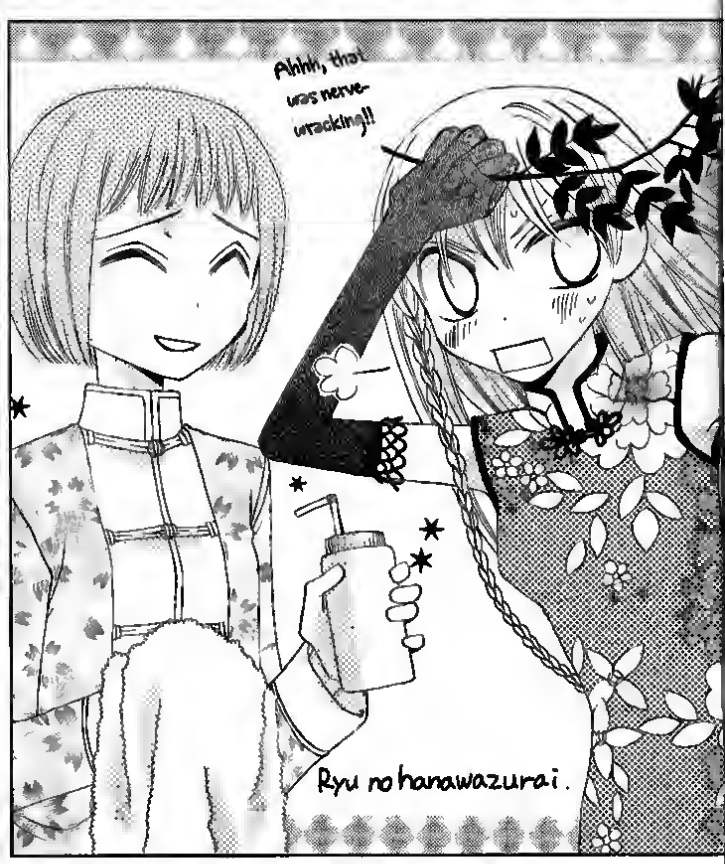

Two Flowers for the Dragon

Volume 4

By Nari Kusakawa

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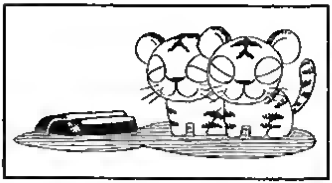

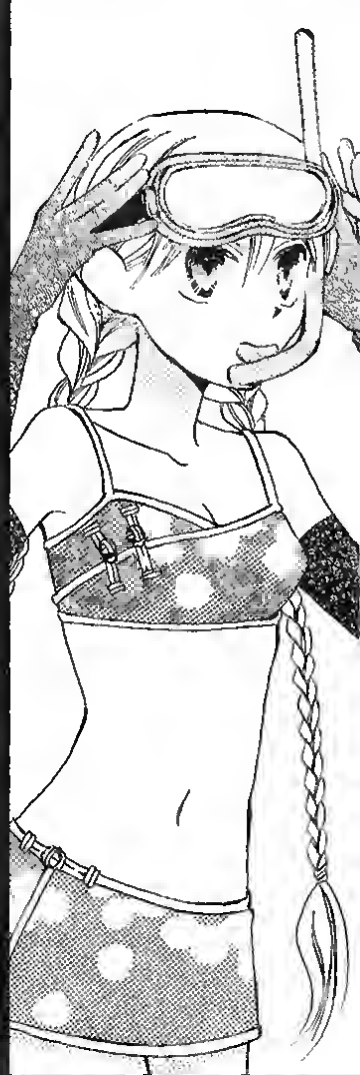

Transcendence

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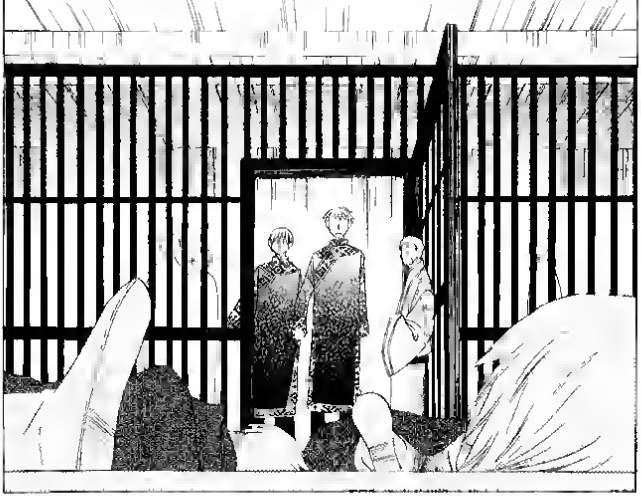
Two Flowers for the Dragon
龍の花わずらい
Episode 15

OASIS OF THE SHADE...
KUWAN WILL BE ALL RIGHT, DON'T YOU THINK?
THEY LEAVE US BEHIND, WITHOUT EVEN TELLING US THE EXTENT OF HIS INJURY... IT BREAKS ME UP, GINGA.
KINTORA, KUWAN'S SUBORDINATE
I can't read this document through my tears...
WE'LL, IT'S NOT LIKE THEY ABANDONED US, KINTORA. WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE AFTERMATH OF THE ATTACK.
GINGA, SAME.
"BESIDES, THEY SAID HIS LIFE WASN'T IN DANGER...
...AND SINCE LADY SHAKUYA TOOK HIM HOME, I'M SURE HE'LL BE FINE.
WHEEOOO WHEEEOOO
Police car! Do you suppose Kuwan is coming this way?
TRUE THERE'S NO FASTER WAY TO GET HIM FROM HERE... TO THERE.
SO THEN QUIT MAKING A FUSS AS SOON AS WE FINISH WITH THE INTERROGATION OF THE MASKED MEN, WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY.
FL
AP!
TA TA TA TA TA
OFFICERS!



THEN WHAT? FOUL PLAY?
OF COURSE
THIS ISN'T SUICIDE.
THIS IS A LOCKUP
I'M SURE YOU HAD GUARDS ON DUTY EVEN AT NIGHT, CHIEF...
AND THE CELL'S ONE WINDOW ISN'T BIG ENOUGH FOR ANYONE TO GET THROUGH
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...?!
THIS IS HOW WE FOUND THEM THIS MORNING. ALL OF THE ONES WE CAPTURED, SUDDENLY DEAD...
DIDN'T YOU TAKE PRECAUTIONS SO THAT THEY COULDN'T COMMIT SUICIDE?!

BUT THE CAUSE OF THEIR DEATHS IS SAND.
INDEED
TOO SMALL FOR A PERSON..
THEY SWALLOWED GREAT QUANTITIES OF IT. IT APPEARS THEIR STOMACHS AND LUNGS ARE FILLED.
SHUDDER
SUFFOCATION?
I SEE
I'M THINKING THIS IS THE PRICE THEY PAID FOR FAILING WITH THAT SANDSTORM SPELL...
LADY SHAKUYA SAID THEY WERE TENACIOUS ABOUT TRYING TO EXECUTE THEIR PLAN, BUT...
IT'S FRUSTRATING. WE DIDN'T EVEN GET THEIR CONFESSIONS ON RECORD.
I SUPPOSE THEIR LIVES WERE ON THE LINE..
WHAT THE DEVIL DID THEY ATTACK THE OASIS OF THE SHADE FOR...?

EERIE IS WHAT IT IS..
Transcendence
Mmm...
LU!
KU!
TONIGHT,
I'M ASSIGNING YOU A DUTY.
FIRST, YOU HAVE TO STAY UP ALL NIGHT!
SECOND, IF IT LOOKS LIKE I'M NODDING OFF...
GENTLY NIP MY LEG TO WAKE ME UP!
Needs more meat on those bones!
What's cooking, guy?
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO ATTEND ME ALL NIGHT.
AH! AH! AH! I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU
YOU'RE AWAKE, BUT YOUR BODY STILL CAN'T MOVE YET, KUWAN.
LET ME STAY WITH YOU, AT LEAST AT A TIME LIKE THIS.

MAKING JOKES LIKE THAT IS TEMPTING FATE, LUCIEN. BUT IN YOUR CASE, YOU'D PROBABLY JUST LOSE YOUR MEMORIES AGAIN!
HMMM... I THINK I'LL GO OUT AND GET MORTALLY WOUNDED.
THEN TELL ME THE SAME LINES YOU JUST SAID TO HIM.
OH, DON'T STAND ON CEREMONY. RELAX.
SHAKUYA, CHAIR.
MY LADY...
SWISH
PLOP
WELL, I DIDN'T EXPECT IT TO BE SO LIVELY IN HERE.
I'VE COME TO CHECK ON KUWAN'S CONDITION
MOTHER!
A REPORT JUST CAME IN. IT SEEMS THAT THE MASKED MEN WHO WERE APPREHENDED...
HAVE BEEN KILLED BY SORCERY FOR THEIR FAILURE
EH?
IS THAT POSSIBLE...?
THIS IS VEXING.

CLAK
YOU'RE NOT A HANDMAID?!
I CAN'T HIDE MY DISCOURAGEMENT EITHER
IT'S LIKE CATCHING A LIZARD, ONLY TO HAVE IT SHED ITS TAIL.
NEXT TIME, TEACH ME HOW TO PUT ON MAKEUP
THE ART OF DISGUISE... WAS ESSENTIAL WHEN I WAS IN EXILE.
DON'T YOU AGREE, HAKURAI?
...BUT HAD SOMEONE BEHIND THEM?
THE LIZARD'S TAIL...
THEN YOU THINK THOSE MEN WE FOUGHT WEREN'T IN CHARGE...
NOD
THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL CASES IN THE PAST..
.. OF OASES BEING DESTROYED BY UNNATURAL SANDSTORMS.

EVEN THE SANDSTORM THAT SWEPT YOU AWAY, LUCIEN...
...IS A LIKELY CANDIDATE FOR BEING ONE OF THEM.
HUH...
BUT THE OLDEST CASE...
.. HAPPENED 16 YEARS AGO.
THAT LONG AGO?!
HOW TO EXPLAIN IT...? IT WAS ABNORMAL BUT YET COULDN'T BE CALLED UNNATURAL.
IT DIDN'T CAUSE MORE OF A STIR AMONGST THE PEOPLE THAN IF IT HAD BEEN JUST A TERRIBLE NATURAL CALAMITY.
I THINK THAT'S WHAT IT WAS LIKE AT THE OASIS OF THE SHADE..
I CAN'T PROVE IT, BUT I CAN'T GET IT OUT OF MY MIND.
WHAT I CAN SAY IS THAT IF THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WITH AN AGENDA FOR DESERT OASES..
...THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO IGNORE THE DRAGON OASIS.

Hello.
Thank you for getting this volume.
I've written somewhere before about how I was born with single-edged eyelids, but that some years ago, one of my eyelids got an extra fold by itself (not through cosmetic surgery!). But recently, the other eyelid joined it, so now both of my eyelids have the double-fold. One of my friends also has "unstable eyelids" too, so we talk about it once in a while, but anyway, as it turns out, my aunt had the same experience a long time ago. She concluded that the cause was aging. Ah-hah ! However...!!
I WAS "EXILED" ...
...SO I COULD DO TOP SECRET RESEARCH ON THE ANOMALOUS SANDSTORMS...
...AS WELL AS KEEP THE DRAGON ORB SAFE, OF COURSE
SOONER OR LATER, WE'LL CLASH.
I JUST WISH YOU WOULD'VE USED A DIFFERENT LIE TO LEAVE...
NOD
WE'LL GET INTO THAT AFTER YOU'VE RECOVERED
RIGHT NOW, I WANT YOU TO RELAX.
SO .DO YOU HAVE SOME IDEA AS TO THE MASTER-MIND BEHIND IT?

GOOD-NIGHT.
NO THANK YOU.
AHHH...
FSST FSST
SHALL I SING YOU TO SLEEP WITH A LULLABY?
THAT'S RIGHT! YOU HAVE TO GET WELL SOON!
PAT
PAT
PAT
BUT I CAN'T SLEEP ANYWAY BECAUSE I KEEP THINKING ABOUT KUWAN...
PAT
PAT
RATTLE RATTLE
.. IF I'M IN A PLACE WHERE I CAN'T SEE HIM.
AND I'M LONELY..

WHAT ARE YOU DOING GAMBLING NEXT TO SOMEONE WHO'S CONVALESCING?
AH! HE'S OUT LIKE A LIGHT...
IT STILL SEEMS LIKE A DEEPER SLEEP THAN NORMAL...
It makes me sad, but I called it.
SO YOU CAME AFTER ALL, SHAKUYA..
Ahhh! I have to opting for everyone's tea!
You need your sleep
Me too!
THEY BET OVER MY NAIVE HEART!!
YOU KNOW, EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT AT HIS SIDE AROUND THE CLOCK...
...KUWAN'S GONNA BE OKAY.
I KNOW, BUT..
GLANCE
...SO I'VE BEEN KILLING TIME WITH THE NIGHT SHIFT HANDMAIDS

I CAN STILL FEEL...
Transcendence
...HIS HOT, SPREADING BLOOD...
...ON MY PALMS.

BY THE WAY, WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING FOR?
YOU WANT TO REST IN HERE, SHAKUYA?
I COULD BRING YOU A BLANKET..
LUCIEN, AFTER THE GAME!
SNAP

THE WINNER...
...GETS TO WIPE DOWN KUWAN'S BODY TOMORROW MORNING.
KA-CHING
RATTLE
!!WAAA! WERE YOU UP ALL NIGHT?
CHIRP
CHIRP..
RATTLE
YOU'VE THOROUGHLY TROUNCED US, LADY SHAKUYA.

SPLISH
SPLISH
ALL RIGHT, GOING TO FILL THIS UP WITH WATER.
WOBBLE WOBBLE
YEP. THE WAY SHE WAS WALKING, IT'S NO SURPRISE SHE SLIPPED.
PLOOSH
WIPE
THANK YOU.
SPLASH!!
I COULDN'T LIVE WITH MYSELF IF I ABANDONED HIM NOW.
DRIP
YOU'RE A DOPE, YOU KNOW THAT?
THIS IS, WHAT, FIVE DAYS WITHOUT SLEEP NOW?

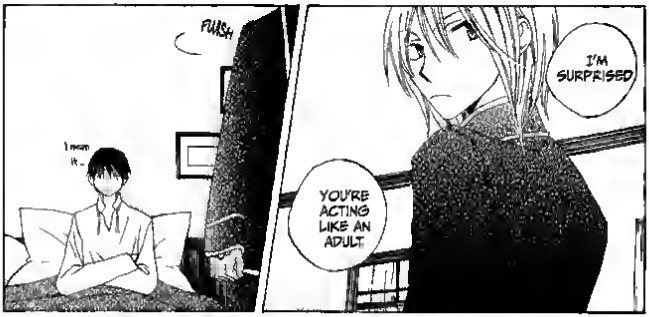
YOU'VE GOT HUGE BAGS UNDER YOUR EYES...
I FIGURED AS MUCH, WHICH IS WHY I SNUCK INTO MY FATHER'S STUFF LAST NIGHT AND PUT ON HIS CONCEALER...
THE POINT IS, GET SOME SLEEP!
YOU DON'T WANNA SLEEP?
what?
...UNTIL KUWAN IS BACK ON HIS FEET.
IF I CAN.
...I WANT TO STAY UP..
BY THAT TIME, YOUR LOOKS WOULD BE WIPED OUT BEYOND THE HELP OF OINTMENTS.
OH, COME ON. I MEAN, YEAH.
You're probably right...
I DON'T REALLY UNDER-STAND IT MYSELF...
...BUT FOR SOME REASON, I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP.

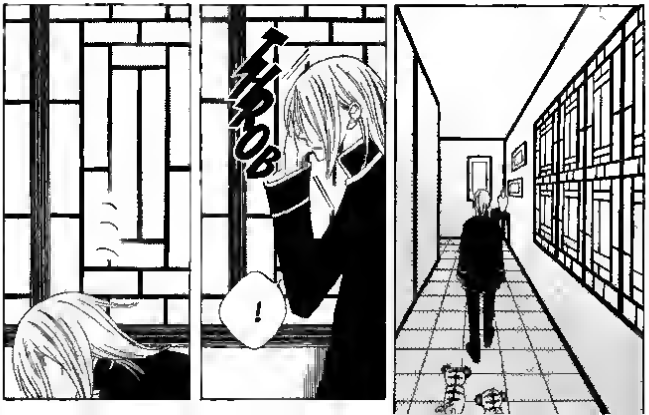
LUCIEN?
SIGH...
I TOLD YOU, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT KUWAN. HE'LL BE FINE!
A SPECIALIST IS REQUIRED HERE.
I KNOW THAT IN MY HEAD, BUT...
Transcendence
AH!

LADY SHAKUYA, YOU WERE LOLLY-GAGGING TOO LONG..
...SO WE DID THE JOB FOR YOU.
TWINKLE TWINKLE
How could you?! That's terrible!
WHAT?
I'M REALLY GRATEFUL..
...YOU DIDN'T KICK THE BUCKET...
.. BECAUSE I CAN'T WIN AGAINST A DEAD MAN.
YOU ALWAYS TALK A GOOD GAME...
...BUT I DON'T THINK YOU'RE GOING TO RACK UP A WIN HERE.
BAM!

JUST DO SOMETHING FOR SHAKUYA.
KKRK
IT GALLS ME TO SAY THIS...
...BUT FOR TODAY, THE GAME IS YOURS, WITH NO COMPLAINTS.
WHY? IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH LADY SHAKUYA?
Shoot!
SHE HASN'T HAD ANY SLEEP... HASN'T EVEN TRIED. SINCE THE OASIS OF THE SHADE...
...BECAUSE SHE'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU
POOR, MISGUIDED GIRL.

...LUCIEN.
I LEAVE THE MATTER IN YOUR HANDS.
BYE.


PUSH
I mean it...
YOU'RE ACTING LIKE AN ADULT.
I'M SURPRISED


KNOB
!

LUPINA...
LUCIEN?! YOU STARTLED ME!
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY ARE YOU SLUMPED AGAINST THE WALL?
DO YOU FEEL SICK?
ALL RIGHT.
Look how high you can get, Kal
Wahaha!
Sick?
NO, IT'S NOTHING. NEVER MIND, JUST GO AHEAD.

Transcendence

DOES YOUR HEAD HURT?
WHY DON'T I CALL LADY SHAKUYA?
NO .. YOU DON'T HAVE TO.
She's the best medicine.
BUT..
Me too!
Hold me up high again!
TRUE..
AND IT WOULD BE HARDER ON YOU IF SHE DIDN'T NURSE YOU THE WAY SHE DOES KUWAN.
RIGHT NOW...
..SHE DOESN'T NEED ANYTHING ELSE TO WORRY ABOUT
WHAT WAS THAT, A CASUAL TWIST OF THE KNIFE IN MY CHEST ?!
OKAY, I WON'T SAY ANYTHING
YOU'RE PROBABLY EXHAUSTED TOO, LUCIEN
Actually, you touched my heart for a second there.
EXHAUSTED..?
I'LL SWIPE A PAINKILLER OR SOMETHING FOR YOU

SINCE LAST NIGHT I'VE HAD JUST A SLIGHT BUT SHARP PAIN...
...AND IT'S NOT FROM BEING TIRED.
WAIT, BRING ME...
THIS MUST BE...
...A SIGN.
GRIND GRIND
I FEEL HONORED THAT YOU'RE CRUSHING THE MEDICINAL HERBS YOURSELF...
BUT YOU'RE DOING IT WRONG.
GRIND
GRIND
GRIND
GRIND
GASP
AH! SORRY!

HE WAS RIGHT. SHE DOES NEED HELP.
WAA!
SLIP
UNFFF!
WOMP!
LADY SHAKUYA...
DO YOU LOVE ME THAT MUCH?
SO MUCH THAT YOU CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT?
Y—
YES!
AH...
HEH-HEH...
WHY IS HE SUDDENLY ASKING ME THAT? OF COURSE I LOVE HIM!
SWISH!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME ANYMORE.
THANKS TO YOU, I'VE SURVIVED WHAT WAS A MORTAL WOUND.
CORRECT?
KUWAN.
BACK AT THAT OASIS... I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO DIE.
FOO
Transcendence

I WAS SO SCARED..
DRIP
WELL, THERE'S NOTHING TO BE SCARED OF NOW
COME HERE, LADY SHAKUYA.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR TEARS.
I DON'T LIKE CRY-BABIES.
HUH? FEELS LIKE.
—MY WORRY JUST FLOATED AWAY
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
ULP

MM...

CHUCKLE

BLUSH
THIS WAY, YOU WON'T HAVE TIME...
...TO THINK SCARY THOUGHTS...
...SO TONIGHT...
...YOU'LL BE ABLE TO HAVE SWEET DREAMS.
YES...
I'LL BE DREAMING OF YOU.

LUCIEN...
I BROUGHT THAT PAINKILLER YOU REQUESTED.
WHY IS IT A CREAM?
AND WHY ARE YOU SPREADING IT ON YOUR CHEST?
BECAUSE MY CHEST HURTS.

Episode 15 / The End

Credits

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Transcendence

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We have Chocolate,
And Bishies.

Transcendence- Welcome
to Scrulating Paradise!

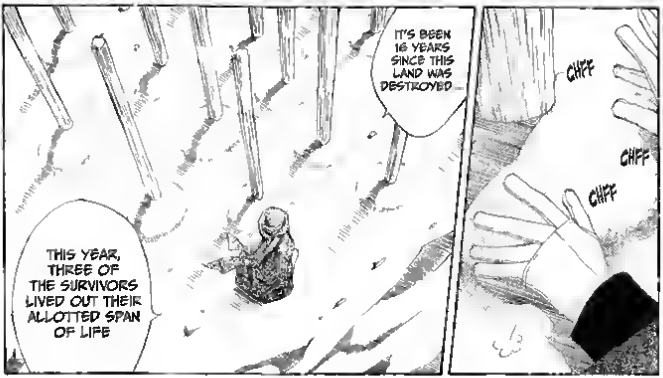
Where your secrets...

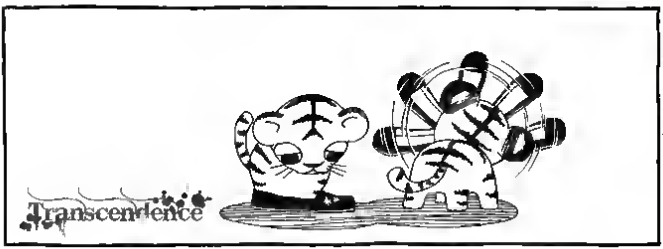
龍(りゅう)の花(はな)わずらい

Two Flowers for the Dragon

Episode 16

FOOOOO


IT'S BEEN 16 YEARS SINCE THIS LAND WAS DESTROYED...
CHFF
CHFF
CHFF
THIS YEAR, THREE OF THE SURVIVORS LIVED OUT THEIR ALLOTTED SPAN OF LIFE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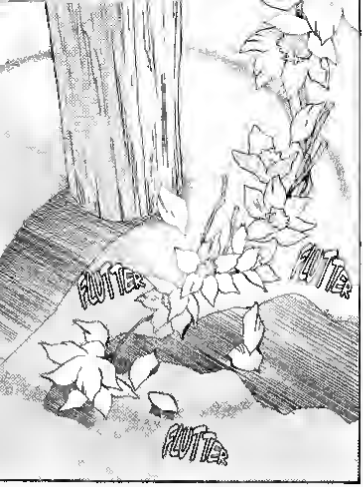
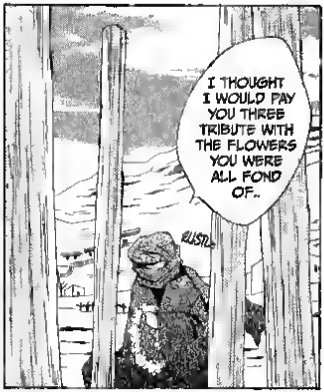

FLUTTER
FLUTTER
FLUTTER


I THOUGHT I WOULD PAY YOU THREE TRIBUTE WITH THE FLOWERS YOU WERE ALL FOND OF..
RUSTL..

...BUT THEY DIDN'T LAST THE TRIP.
FOOOO
FORGIVE ME.

ONE OF THESE DAYS, I PROMISE TO PRESENT YOU WITH...
...A GREEN CANOPY
LADY SHAKUYA!

FIDGET
FIDGET FIDGET
I SAW THEM OVER THERE, BUT THEY'VE ALREADY HAD LUNCH.
IT'S TIME FOR US TO FEED THEM...
AH... UMM...
HAVE YOU SEEN THE TIGERS?
?
TA TA TA TA!
OH, REALLY? THEN PARDON US!
WHY IS SHE WEARING GLOVES THAT GO PAST THE ELBOWS NOW?!!
YOU TWO ARE SPINELESS!
Sula
Pyun
DID YOU SEE?
DID YOU ASK HER?
WE SAW, BUT WE COULDN'T GET UP THE NERVE TO ASK HER.

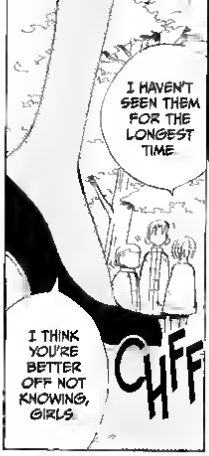
JUST TURNED BEET RED AND BEHAVED LIKE A MOONSTRUCK CALF!
I ALREADY DID ASK HER...
...BUT SHE WOULDN'T 'FESS UP!
Hmph!
JUDGING BY WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON RECENTLY...
...I THINK IF THERE'S ANY PROGRESS BEING MADE, IT'S IN KUWAN'S FAVOR.
That's what my hormonally-tuned radar tells me.
YOU ASK HER, LUPINA.
YOU'RE WITH LADY SHAKUYA ALL THE TIME.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS...
...BUT SOMETHING DEFINITELY HAPPENED...
...BECAUSE THE FLOWERS ARE INCREASING
...ALONG WITH THE AREA OF ARM SPACE SHE WANTS TO HIDE.

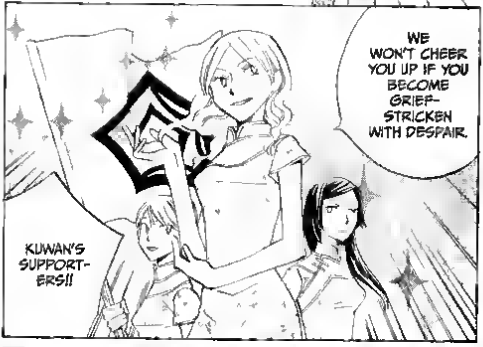
MEAL TICKETS ARE ON THE LINE FOR ME.
YES, I COULD WIN OR LOSE A CERTAIN SUM OF MONEY.
THE THREE OF US ARE ON LUCIEN'S SIDE, AREN'T WE?
WE'VE EVEN BET THAT HE'S GOING TO WIN HER HEART IN THE END
DO YOU THINK LUCIEN IS STILL IN THE RUNNING...?!

Transcendence

About the Bonus Drama CD

The magazine that episode #17 was published in included a bonus drama CD of "Two Flowers for the Dragon".
It's not being sold anymore, so I'm sure some readers will think there's not much point in me playing it up, really, but it's one of those things that rarely happens, so let me mention it here, just for the record.
The story takes place just after episode 6, with Shakuya having a cold. Lucian and Kuwan, who were sick in episode 6, quarrel with each other. I loved hearing Lu and Ku romp around.





OHOHO! I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING, BUT THIS CONTEST IS AS GOOD AS OVER!
HAVE YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT ANY CHANGES IN THE FLOWERS, NEI SAN?
NEI SAN (27), KUWAN'S NUMBER 1 SUPPORTER.

NO, I CAN'T SAY I HAVE FOUND THOSE FLAMES, WHICH CAN PROBABLY ONLY BURN IN HELL, IN MY MISTRESS'S EYES.
I CAN ATTEST TO HER UNSTEADY MAIDEN'S HEART, THOUGH.
CAN'T YOU SEE...
...THE FLAMES OF LOVE WITHIN LADY SHAKUYA'S EYES?
THEY'RE JET-BLACK, SYMBOLIC OF KUWAN!
UNSTEADY? HEH-HEH.
DO YOU REALLY SUPPOSE IT'S UNSTEADY?
AS SHAKY AS A BABY TOOTH.
LET'S WAIT FOR HER TO WASH HER NECK, SO WE CAN SEE EXACTLY HOW MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TWO FLOWERS.
All right.
I WAS HOPING YOU'D SAY THAT! YOU'LL BE LAUGHING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF YOUR FACE THEN!
WHY WERE YOU SO ARRO-GANT?
YAAA!!
SHE WOUND ME UP...

HMM.
WHENEVER I THINK ABOUT KUWAN, I BLUSH.
SO I'M THANKFUL FOR THE WATER-FALL.
DUN DUN DUN DUN
SSSS
DUN
DUN
DUN
DUN
IT LETS ME RESET MY FEELINGS A LITTLE..
"THIS WAY, YOU WON'T HAVE TIME TO THINK SCARY THOUGHTS..."
COME TO THINK OF IT, THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE...
"PREPARE TO ACCEPT MY LOVE."
LADY SHAKUYA!
THIS IS A SERIOUS CASE!
THE WATER'S TURNING INTO STEAM, SO WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE MORE!
RUSTLE!

ACTING MOONSTRUCK AND NERVOUS IS A SIGN THAT SHE'S HAPPY BUT EMBARRASSED ABOUT IT.
SHE'S GOTTA SECRETLY WANNA TALK ABOUT IT, THOUGH...
LET'S BEGIN THE INVESTI-GATION!!
I'LL CORNER HER AND DRAW OUT A CONFESSION!
Detective Lupina
Transcendence

LUPINA...
PUYAN AND SULA, TOO?
IS SOME-THING WRONG?

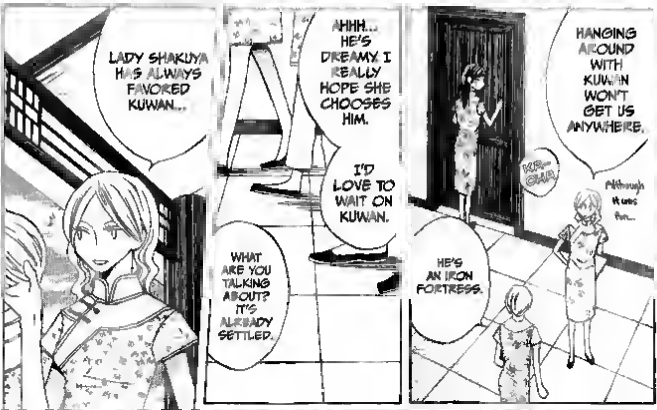
EVEN IF I CAN WORK MYSELF UP TO ASKING HER THE QUESTION, I'M NOT PREPARED FOR THE ANSWER

FWISH
OH! KUWAN!
PLEASE DON'T OVEREXERT YOURSELF.

♡ LADY SHAKUYA'S TENDER LOVING CARE WORKED LIKE A CHARM!
Ohohoh!
IF I LIE IDLY TOO LONG, I'LL GET RUSTY.
EVERYONE'S TELLING ME TO RELAX, BUT I'M ALREADY HEALED UP

NOT ESPECIALLY.
SOMETHING THAT DROVE LADY SHAKUYA TO DISTRAC-TION?
Well...
PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT.
TAK
NOT QUITE THE FULLY FLESHED-OUT RESPONSE I WAS HOPING FOR.
SPEAKING PLAINLY, SOMETHING HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU TWO, DIDN'T IT?
NOPE
SWAY
YOU CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING?
I DON'T KNOW. LUCIEN'S A GOOD MAN...
WOULD YOU TELL LUCIEN IF HE WERE HERE?
He's smooth, I'll give him that...
LIAR..

...OR HE WILL BE, TEN YEARS FROM NOW.
WELL PUT...!

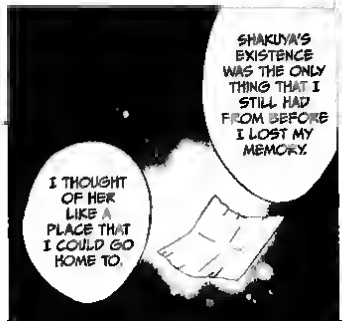

LADY SHAKUYA HAS ALWAYS FAVORED KUWAN...
AHHH... HE'S DREAMY. I REALLY HOPE SHE CHOOSES HIM.
I'D LOVE TO WAIT ON KUWAN.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IT'S ALREADY SETTLED.
HANGING AROUND WITH KUWAN WON'T GET US ANYWHERE.
HE'S AN IRON FORTRESS.
Although it was fun...

ANIMALS LOVE THAT BOY...
IT SHOULD BE A HEART-WARMING SCENE, BUT FOR SOME REASON...
...I ALWAYS JUST FEEL PITY FOR HIM.
...
...
...
UM...
STARE
LUCIEN...
WHERE'S THAT COMING FROM?!
GIVE UP ON LADY SHAKUYA
PAT!

WE'RE NOT TRYING TO TEMPT YOU JUST BECAUSE WE'RE ON THE OTHER SIDE.
WE CAN SEE THE HURT IN YOUR EYES. WE'RE GIVING YOU COUNSEL OUT OF KINDNESS.
IT'S ANNOYING ADVICE, THOUGH, AND NOT APPRECIATED AT ALL.
WOULD YOU TURN A DEAF EAR TO US?
I ALREADY HEARD YOU!
WHY ARE YOU SO ENAMORED OF LADY SHAKUYA?

LOOKING AT THE SITUATION OBJECTIVELY, YOU CAN SEE THAT SHE'D BE A BURDEN AS A WIFE, CAN'T YOU?
YOU CAN HAVE YOUR PICK OF ANY NUMBER OF OTHER GIRLS.
SO YOU'RE MEMBERS OF KUWAN'S FAN CLUB.

WHY..?
HER LOOKS? HER PERSONALITY?
Shakuya Level 15 Special skill Transformation


SHAKUYA'S EXISTENCE WAS THE ONLY THING THAT I STILL HAD FROM BEFORE I LOST MY MEMORY.
I THOUGHT OF HER LIKE A PLACE THAT I COULD GO HOME TO.

THAT GIRL IS KIND OF SPECIAL TO ME.
WHEN I WAS IN THE DESERT, I USED HER AS A CRUTCH.

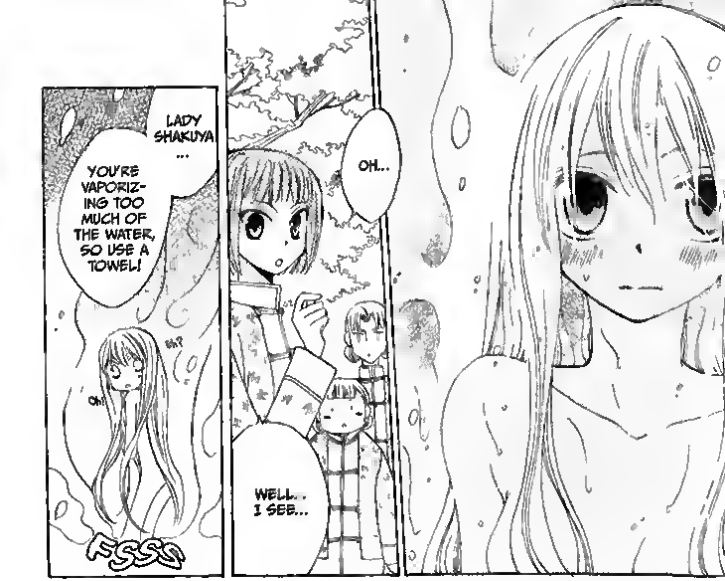
AND THERE WERE SOME THINGS THAT WERE DIFFERENT FROM THE WAY I'D IMAGINED THEM...
...I WASN'T EXACTLY MET WITH OPEN ARMS.
WHEN I ACTUALLY DID MAKE IT BACK HOME, THOUGH...
TAP
I FEEL RELIEVED WHEN I'M BY SHAKUYA'S SIDE.
...BUT I LOVE HER.
YOU'RE SUGGESTING THAT MY HEART COULD OPEN TO ANOTHER WOMAN?
THEN WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOUR MEMORIES RETURNED?
EXACTLY.
FOO
LIKE THIS...
FOO
FOO

NO, IT DOESN'T.
THERE, YOU SEE?! THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO STRAIGHTEN OUT YOUR LIFE.
IT DOESN'T FEEL BAD, BUT IF I FELL FOR YOU FAWNING ON ME LIKE THAT...
Hey, stroke my hair
CLING
OOO
IT DOESN'T FEEL BAD WHEN OTHER GIRLS ARE NICE TO YOU, DOES IT?
STALKER
...I'D END UP...
...SUFFERING A LOT MORE.
WHISPER
FOO

SORRY TO PUT YOUR CONCERN TO WASTE..
...BUT I ONLY WANT SHAKUYA TO BE NICE TO ME AFTER ALL.
GRIN
PLEASE DON'T LOWER YOUR TONE AND WHISPER TO ME LIKE THAT!
You tried my heart with this boy!
HAVE YOU EVER SUFFERED?
THAT'S A SECRET.
AAAAAAAAA
SURE I DON'T TELL YOU EVERY-THING, WHY?
LADY SHAKUYA ..
THERE'S SOMETHING YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME ABOUT, ISN'T THERE?
UM, HOW HAVE YOU BEEN FEELING LATELY?
WHAT, YOU SEE ME EVERY DAY!

I CAN SEE THROUGH THE WATER!
FOO
OOO
...ARE EITHER OF YOUR FLOWERS GROWING?
I HATE TO ASK YOU OUTRIGHT, BUT...
IT'S THE BELL-FLOWERS THAT ARE INCREASING... AREN'T THEY?
WE'LL TRICK HER INTO TELLING THE TRUTH!
UM, WHY, NO..
SOMETHING ROMANTIC HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU AND KUWAN, DIDN'T IT?
...
...
YES.
...
...
WAIT! LET ME GUESS WHAT IT WAS.
CHUCKLE
OH!!

DUN
NO.
DUN
DUN
Mask
I love you
HE TOLD YOU THAT, RIGHT?
.. NO
DUN
DUN
DUN
HE HASN'T... KISSED YOU YET, HAS HE?
DUN
DUN
DUN
HMM... NOT MUCH RESPONSE THERE
I SUPPOSE IF THAT'S ALL IT WAS, SHE'D JUST BE IN NORMALLY HIGH SPIRITS.
OKAY, THEN, HE PUT HIS ARMS AROUND YOU.
HSSSSS!


LADY SHAKUYA ...
YOU'RE VAPORIZING TOO MUCH OF THE WATER, SO USE A TOWEL!
EH?
OH!
FSSS
OH...
WELL... I SEE...

FWISH!
HERE!
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
EH?
WHY ARE YOU COMING OVER HERE?
HERE!
JUST THROW IT TO ME!
IS IT WORSE THAN WE THOUGHT ...?!

NOW WE'LL SEE!!
Cross~
Awww!
Awww!
AH!
KRRRRRRRRR
KRRRRRRRRR
NUTS...
SHE'S JUST A LITTLE OUT OF CONTROL?
あわわ
AWAWAWAWA

WE CAN'T ASK KUWAN TO DO IT. HE'S STILL CONVA-LESCING.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO? DO YOU THINK SHE CAN BE CALMED DOWN?
ZA AA AA AA
IT'S GONNA BE HARD TO ASK ANYONE TO HELP THIS TIME.
WHIZZZZZZ
LADY SHAKUYA!
WHY DON'T WE WORK TOGETHER AND SEE IF WE CAN DO SOMETHING?
Transcendence
RRR
RRR
RRR
RRR
RRR
HEY, HONEY...
AH! LUCIEN!
MOVE IT!
RRR
RRR

SNIFF SNIFF
I THINK LADY SHAKUYA FELT LIKE SHE WANTED TO CRAWL INTO A HOLE.
WHAT'S SHAKUYA DOING?...AND LET ME ADD TO THAT, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I CALL THIS THE "YAMATA-NOOROCHI" INITIATIVE"!
AND TRANS-FORMING MAKES THAT POSSIBLE
THEY'RE TREATING HER LIKE A SNAKE AGAIN...
VICTORY WILL BE OURS ONCE SHE GETS DRUNK ON THIS EXCELLENT RICE WINE, THE COOK'S PRIDE!
WHUMP!
WHUMP!

* Giant serpent of legend that was defeated when it got drunk on rice wine

PUT THIS ON.
LUCIEN WAS KIND ENOUGH TO LEND IT TO YOU.
CRICKLE
Can we pay you in installments??
EH?
EIGHT JUGS...
CRICKLE
CRICKLE
I COULD'VE EASILY STOPPED HER..
HMM.
NO, WE WERE KIND OF RESPONSIBLE THIS TIME..
HEH-HEH-HEH. LUFINA, I LOVE YOU!!
♡
THANK YOU
FWAP

I LOVE YOU TOO, CHEF.
PECK
THAT'S MAGNANI-MOUS OF YOU, BUT...
Hey!
PECK
Transcendence
GASP

SMACK!
RUSTLE...
SLUMP
?
...I DON'T WANT A KISS LIKE THAT.

GIVE ME FLOWERS, TOO.

Zzzzz
Zzzzz
...SEVEN TO ONE-AND-A-HALF, THEN.
YEP.
I ACTED LIKE AN UNCIVILIZED LOUT
DITTO.

WE'RE THE PEANUT GALLERY WE'VE GOT TO KEEP OUR DISTANCE
OTHERWISE, WE'LL GET DRAGGED INTO THEIR WHATEVER-IT-IS TRIANGLE.
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT..
AS HANDMAIDS, WE'RE ALL ON THE SAME SIDE...LADY SHAKUYA'S SIDE.

AND THAT'S KUWAN.
NO, I WAS THINKING LUCIEN
YOU SAW HOW MANY FLOWERS HE'S HARMING BY
DON'T REMIND ME!
Hey, Lucien?
SNICK SNICK
WE'LL ALSO SUPPORT THE MAN WE THINK IS RIGHT FOR LADY SHAKUYA..
THE MAN WHO..
.. WILL ALWAYS KEEP HER SMILING..
Transcendence

Episode 16 / The End

Credits

Cleaner: Moonlit Phoenix
Qcer: Xqe
Scan Provider: Manga Traders

Transcendence

Visit us at
www.ourtranscendence.com!

Join Us,
We have Chocolate,
And Bishies.

Transcendence- Welcome
to Scrulating Paradise!

Where your secrets...

Transcendence's First Year Anniversary!

It's been a year since Transcendence went online and what a year it has been! We already completed scanlating two series and are currently working on 18 others!

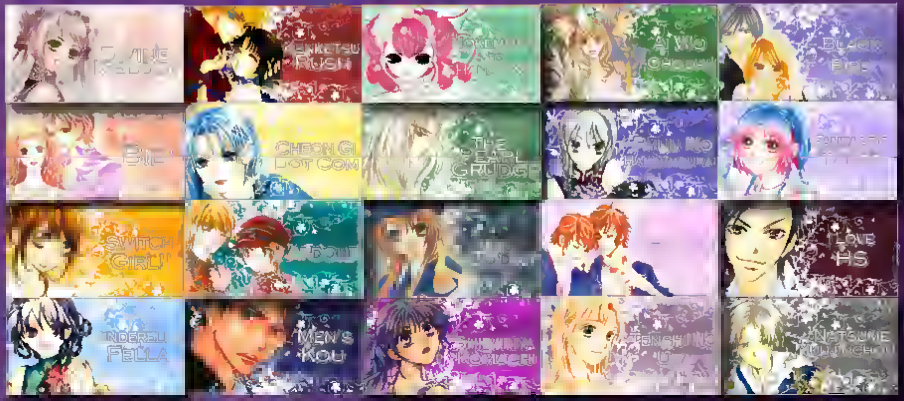
When we first started this group, only a couple of members were willing to join. Over the course of the year, we now have around 80 staffers (active & semi-active) occupying various positions!

We would like to thank all of the wonderful staffers and their contributions to the team! Special thanks to the co-admins and to all of the members who stuck with Transcendence since the very beginning! All of your hard work is much appreciated!

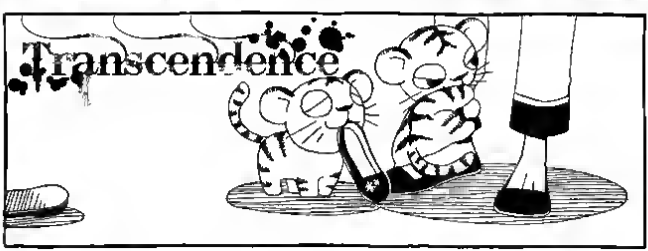
To our faithful readers and manga community, thanks for your support! Here's to another year of incredible art and stories!

Sincerely,
Transcendence Staff
- March 2010 -

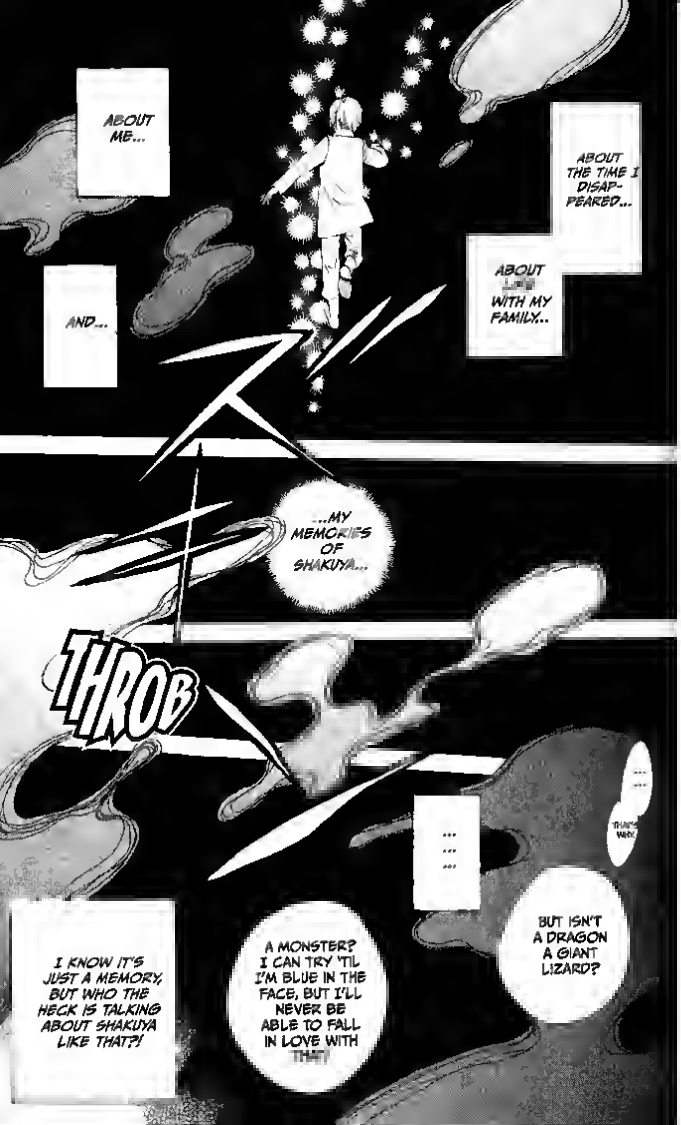
Projects we have worked on so far:



...AND TEASES ME WITH THEM.
MY HEAD HURTS.
A BRIGHT RED SPOON...
THROB
...SCOOPS OUT SLEEPING MEMORIES FROM MY UNCONSCIOUS.
THROB
THROB

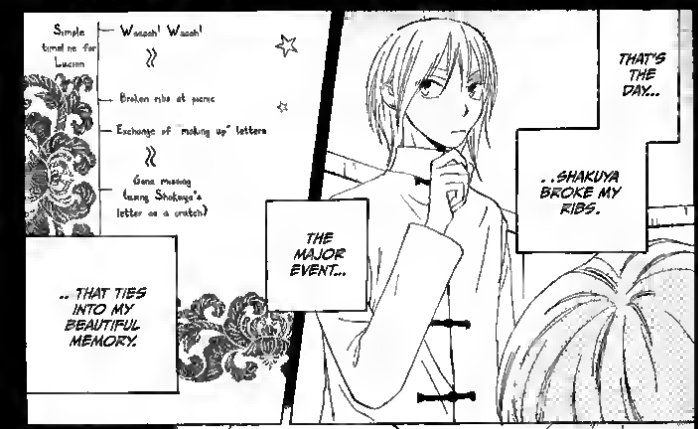

Transcendence

THROB
IS THAT ME...
...FIVE YEARS AGO?!
WAIT..
YOU KNOW IT ALL, DON'T YOU?
THROB


ABOUT ME...
AND...
ABOUT THE TIME I DISAP-PEARED...
ABOUT [illegible] WITH MY FAMILY...
...MY MEMORIES OF SHAKUYA...
THROB
I KNOW IT'S JUST A MEMORY, BUT WHO THE HECK IS TALKING ABOUT SHAKUYA LIKE THAT?!
A MONSTER? I CAN TRY 'TIL I'M BLUE IN THE FACE, BUT I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO FALL IN LOVE WITH [illegible]
...
...
...
BUT ISN'T A DRAGON A GIANT LIZARD?
...
...
THINK HARD

UM...
THIS IS MY ROOM!?
FLASH
BUT BUSINESS IS BUSINESS.
AND EVEN IF SHE'S A MONSTER THAT'S COVERED IN SCALES, I'LL DO MY PART WITH FINESSE
Ahaha!
YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S BADMOUTHING SHAKUYA. I MEAN, IT'S ME..?!
..I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S ME!!
I DON'T FOLLOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, BUT..
YOU TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING I KNOW, FATHER
WAIT A SECOND
WELL SPOKEN, LUCIEN

YOU'VE GOT A PICNIC TOMORROW WITH LADY SHAKUYA.
YES, I KNOW.
PICNIC?


Simple timeline for Lucien
Waaah! Waaah!
Broken ribs at picnic
Exchange of "making up" letters
Gone missing (using Shakuya's letter as a crutch)
THAT'S THE DAY..
..SHAKUYA BROKE MY RIBS.
THE MAJOR EVENT...
.. THAT TIES INTO MY BEAUTIFUL MEMORY.

EXACTLY. "BUSINESS IS ALL ABOUT PERSONALITY"
I KNOW MY WEAK CONSTITUTION IS THOUGHT OF AS A MINUS REGARDING THE PROSPECT OF BECOMING THE DRAGON'S HUSBAND-TO-BE, BUT IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
...OR SO I THOUGHT.
I'LL TAME HER WITH MY "KIND CHARACTER".
GOOD-NIGHT.

TA TA TA TA TA
KA-CHA
HOO..
THAT PIPE STINKS!
SQUEAK
Tch!
THIS GRUMPY KID IS ME?
FWUMP!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT..
AHHH.. I FEEL SLUG-GISH..
WHY DO I HAVE TO DATE A DRAGON?
I COULD PROBABLY GO OUT WITH ANY GIRL I WANTED..
BUT I CAN HEAR HIS INNERMOST THOUGHTS, PROOF IT'S MY MEMORY.

I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE.
MY ENTIRE LIFE HAS BEEN LAID OUT FOR ME
I WAS CHOSEN ...
...TO BE THE DRAGON'S LIFE PARTNER.
ROLL
SO THERE WAS A TIME...
...WHEN I REBELLED AGAINST IT, IF ONLY IN MY MIND.
FINE. IF I'M BEING USED, I CAN USE, TOO.
SNICKER
AND TOMORROW WILL BE MY OPENING MOVE. NOW I HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO.
THIS...
...IS ME.

TAKE WHAT YOU LIKE! ♡
THE CHEF OF THE DRAGON SHRINE MADE THIS SPECIAL LUNCH
I MADE SOME SWEETS, TOO!
Hehheh
Mmm... Good!
CHEW CHEW
WOW! IT ALL LOOKS DELICIOUS!
HUH. YOU CALL THIS "SPECIAL"?
OUR CHEF CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS.
CHEF TAUGHT ME HOW TO DO IT.
SHE LEARNED .. FOR MY SAKE?
BUT I'LL START WITH THIS RICE CAKE
HUH. SHE TREATED ME WELL ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
She had no choice either, but certainly made an effort!
I WANTED TO EAT SWEETS THAT A PROFESSIONAL MADE .
HEY, ME!

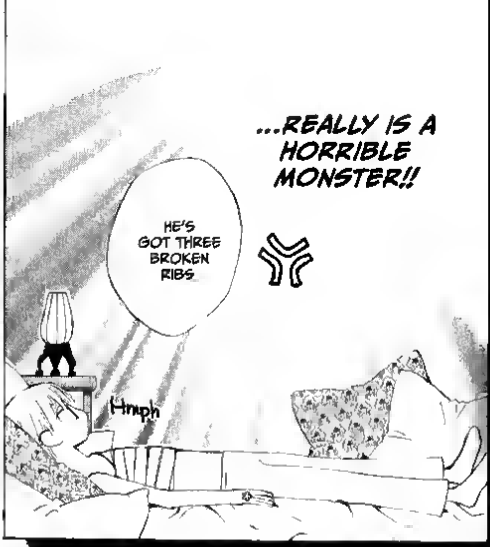
SCUTTLE SCUTTLE
And then I...
DON'T YOU FEEL ANYTHING FOR SHAKUYA ..?
THUMP
KYAAA!
FWISH
EH?
A SCORTION ?!
THAT'S A CRAY-FISH...
LADY SHAKUYA?
KRRK
KRR
KKL

RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
EEEEk
TRY TO CALM DOWN!!
OH, NO! LADY SHAKUYA IS OUT OF CONTROL!
SNAP CRACKLE POP
THWAK!!
SHAKUYA...
THAT GIRL...
SHUDDER
OPEN YOUR EYES!
LUCIEN!
ROLL ROLL ROLL
LUCIEN, ARE YOU OKAY?!

About the bonus drama CD (2)

When I think of drama CDs, I think of the recording process here, Shakuya was played by Asami Nakahara, Lucien and Lu were played by Toshiaki Suguyama-san, and Kuwen and Ku were played by Koji Yusa-san.

I'd stayed up almost all night on the day before the recording, so when I arrived in Tokyo, manuscript in hand, my eyes were all filmy. I got to meet the voice actors at the studio. Nakahara-san, being a woman, I could see, but because my eyes were so blurry, I couldn't differentiate between the faces of Suguyama-san and Yusa-san. I pretended I could see them, though, and used the color of their clothes to tell them apart. I'm sorry.



A LETTER?
"WHEN LIFE HANDS YOU LEMONS, MAKE LEMONADE."
WRITE A LETTER, LUCIEN.
DON'T SULK
IT SHOWS ON YOUR FACE.
I CAN'T HELP IT! I'M IN PAIN.

NO, NO, NO
WRITE THAT YOU WANT HER TO THINK NOTHING OF WHAT HAPPENED!
FWISH FWISH
DEAR ACCURSED SHAKUYA,
YOU BROKE THREE OF MY RIBS..
...
...
...
I SEE WE CAN TURN THIS TO OUR ADVANTAGE
YOU'VE GOT BEAUTIFUL HANDWRITING...
...SO SHE'LL THINK IT'S SINCERE
SHAKUYA.. I'M SO SORRY..
TWICKLE

IT MUST BE A REPLY TO MY LETTER FROM THE OTHER DAY.
SHE TOOK THE BAIT...!
...NHH!
LUCIEN...
YOU'VE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM LADY SHAKUYA.
MOTHER...
MY POOR BOY...

WHY "POOR", MOTHER?
THERE'S NO REASON TO FEEL SORRY FOR ME
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE POURING YOUR HEART INTO ANY "MAKE UP" LETTERS
AT YOUR AGE, YOUR LIFE SHOULDN'T BE RULED BY "THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS".
IF THOSE THINGS AREN'T WORTHY OF PITY, WHAT IS?
SNIFF
PEOPLE USE ME AND I USE PEOPLE.
AM I STUPIDLY GOING TO EXPRESS THE WAY I REALLY FEEL?
NO. THAT WOULD RUIN MY FAMILY... AND EVERYTHING
FLUTTER...

SLASH
PERFUME?
PRETTY GIRL-LIKE FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS JAGGED CLAWS LIKE THAT...
IT SMELLS LIKE ROSES...
AND THOSE SWEETS, TOO.
GIGGLE
They came out well.
...

RUSTLE...
"I PRAY THAT YOU GET WELL SOON."
THERE'S REAL AFFECTION IN HERE, WITHOUT A DOUBT.
WHERE'S THAT HONESTY COMING FROM?
NEXT WEEK, I'M GOING ON A BUSINESS TRIP TO THE OASIS OF THE CRESCENT MOON.
COME WITH ME, LUCIEN.
OH. LUCIEN TOO?
ONE OF MY CUSTOMERS, A MERCHANT, SAYS HE'D LIKE TO MEET THE BOY.
IT'S NO WONDER HE WANTS TO MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE DRAGON'S BETROTHED.
IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, ISN'T IT, LUCIEN?
SURE.

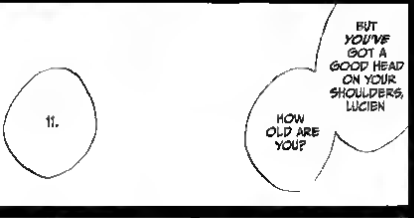
THE OASIS OF THE CRESCENT MOO...
ARE YOU TIRED?
TIRED OF HEARING OBVIOUS FLATTERY.
I'M MUCH BETTER AT PRAISING PEOPLE.
OH, DON'T TALK LIKE THAT. HE HAPPENS TO BE A VERY GOOD CUSTOMER.
I KNOW.
WE'LL BE WITH HIM AT TOMORROW'S INSPECTION AND GET-TOGETHER AS WELL.

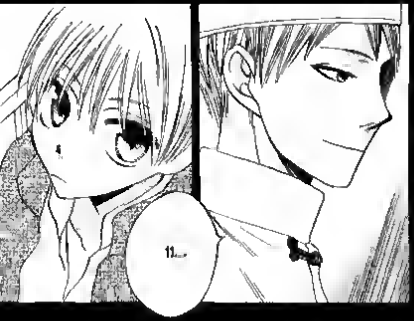
RATTLE
WHY DID I BRING THIS WITH ME..?
FWOO
RATTLE
RATTLE
THAT'S...
MM...
A SAND-STORM. DAMN BIG ONE
Transcendence
EXCUSE ME.
THERE'S A SANDSTORM ON THE WAY, SO PLEASE FOLLOW ME TO THE BASEMENT.
NOK NOK!
KA-CHA
IT SHOULD BE SAFER THAN THIS ROOM.
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ

BUMP!
SOR...
THIS HAS THROWN THE SERVANTS INTO CONFUSION...
CHECK THE SECOND FLOOR FOR PEOPLE!
I'VE GOT MY OWN CHORES!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I RECOGNIZE YOU. YOU'RE ONE OF THE GUESTS. LUCIEN, IS IT?
LUCIEN! STAY WITH ME!
BUMP!
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
UH...
THIS PLACE SURE HAS A LOT OF SERVANTS.
WELL, IT'S EXCLUSIVELY FOR USE BY TRADERS WHO COME TO THE OASIS OF THE CRESCENT MOON... AND THEY LIKE TO BE WAITED ON.
IT'S A LITTLE-KNOWN SHORTCUT AND MUCH BETTER THAN HAVING TO TRY AND SQUEEZE YOUR WAY THROUGH.
IT'S MY FAULT YOU GOT SEPARATED FROM YOUR FATHER... I'LL SHOW YOU ANOTHER STAIRWAY.
ONE THAT'S LESS MOBBED WITH PEOPLE.
THANK YOU

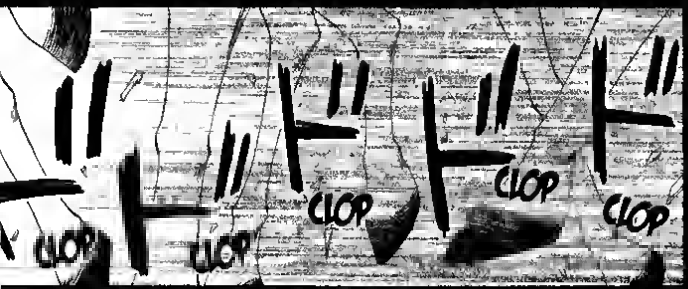
FWOOO
I HAVE TO GO OUTSIDE?
THESE STAIRS
CREAK
FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!
CONFOUNDED SANDSTORM..
FWOOOO
THE STORM'S NOT HERE YET, AND A DOOR LEADING TO THE BASEMENT IS CLOSE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS
FWAP
OW!
SO COME ON!
WELL, I'VE GOT TO HURRY BACK SO I CAN HELP BOLT THE PLACE DOWN...
FWOOOOOOO

THE INTERVIEWS AND TRAINING PROCESS WERE BRUTAL
I'M A BIT OF A BLUNDERER, YOU SEE.


11.
HOW OLD ARE YOU?
BUT YOU'VE GOT A GOOD HEAD ON YOUR SHOULDERS, LUCIEN


11...

HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING HERE LONG?
NO, I'M STILL A "NEWBIE".


CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP

CLOP
UH..
SIR? A BUNCH OF HORSES..
ARE SO SCARED OF THE SANDSTORM, THEY MUST'VE BROKEN THROUGH THEIR ROPES!
THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY!
JUST BEFORE I BUMPED INTO YOU..
WE'D BETTER GET IN THAT BASEMENT.
THIS IS DANGEROUS!

WHAT?
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU...?
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
...I CUT THEIR ROPES..
...SO THAT IN THE ENSUING CONFUSION..
...I COULD SAY, "GOODBYE, LUCIEN RUCKER."

SHUK

THAT'S RIGHT.
I WAS STABBED...

FWOO OOOO
...ONLY ONE REASON...
THERE CAN BE...

I WAS CHOSEN TO BE THE DRAGON'S LIFE PARTNER...
...BUT IN THE END, THE LIFE THAT'S BEEN LAID OUT FOR ME... IS OVER.
...THIS HAS HAPPENED TO ME.
...WHO ARE THEY?
THAT GIRL, TOO... SHE WAS BORN A DRAGON...
HER LIFE PROBABLY ISN'T HER OWN, EITHER...

I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU GET HURT...
ALWAYS KEEP SMILING...

...SHAKUYA.

Episode 17 Preview Cut

Even though this is a love triangle manga, this is only the second time I've had the three of them together for a preview cut

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龍(りゅう)の花(はな)わずらい
Two Flowers for the Dragon
Episode 18
Transcendence

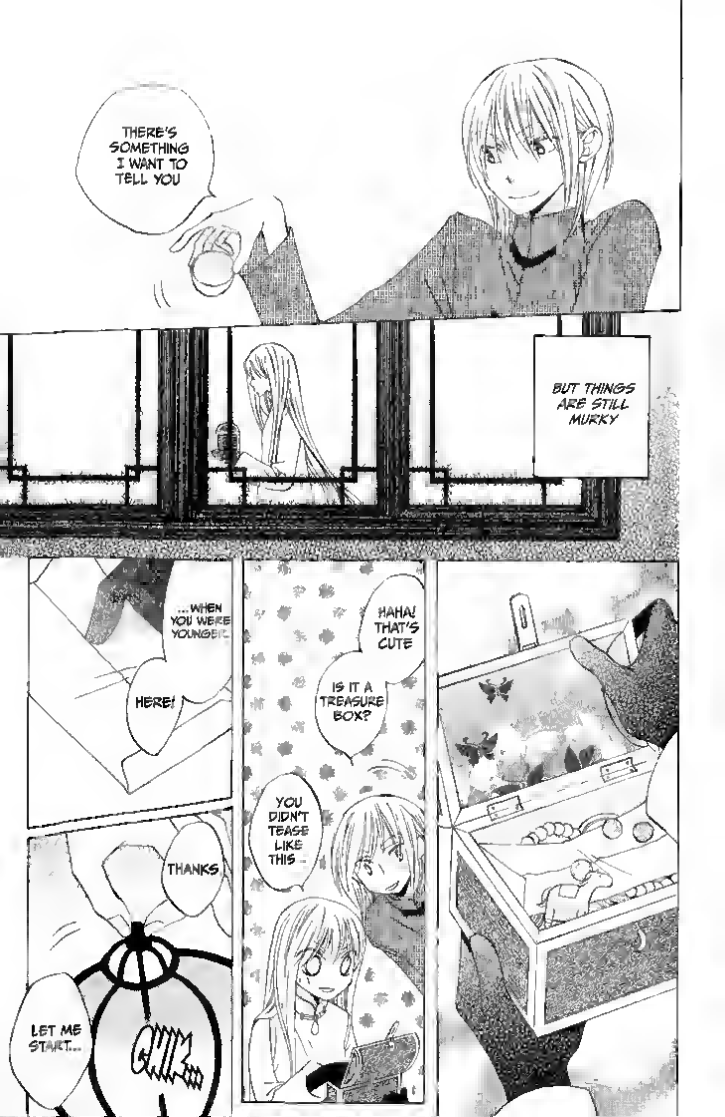
MMM...
HUH?
WHY AM I IN BED?
RUB RUB
DID I TAKE A NAP..?
Show us the tattoos!
Come on! Let us see!
PUSH PUSH PUSH
I REMEMBER A SCENE LIKE THAT...
But then it gets all fuzzy...
FIRST OF ALL, GET MY GLOVES ON...
TUG
WONDER WHAT TIME IT IS...
IT'S ALREADY DARK OUTS!...

KYAAA!!
...DE.
DANGLE
A GHOST!!
OR... LUCIEN?!
DANGLE
WHY?!
Zip
LET ME IN.
I CAN'T HOLD ON ANY LONGER ..GONNA FALL...
EH?
PLEASE DON'T DO THINGS THAT ARE BAD FOR MY HEART!
THIS IS THE THIRD FLOOR!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! YOUR LEGS ARE QUIVERING!

I-I DIDN'T INVITE YOU IN!
ANYONE WITH AN OUNCE OF COMMON SENSE WOULDN'T ENTER SOMEBODY'S BEDROOM WINDOW AT NIGHT!
SORRY.
GRIN
THANKS, SHAKUYA.
FWUP
I WAS LONGING TO SEE YOU.
WELL, WHO COULD BLAME ME...?
WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT...
...YOU'RE BASICALLY ALWAYS ANGRY AT ME.
IT DOESN'T WORK ON A DISPASSIONATE FIANCÉE?
LINES LIKE THAT ONLY WORK ON PASSIONATE LOVERS.
You should remember that.

FIVE YEARS AGO, RIGHT BEFORE LOSING MY MEMORIES, I SENT OUT A PRAYER TO SHAKUYA.
I CAN'T JUST DO IT ON COMMAND!
STINGY!
THE FEELINGS I HAVE FOR HER NOW ARE JUMBLED UP..
...WITH THE FEELINGS I HAD FOR HER IN THE PAST THAT WAS CUT ALL TOO SHORT
I DISCOVERED HER LETTER RIGHT AFTER BECOMING AMNESIC
GO HOME, LUCIEN.
THE DOOR IS THIS WAY
SHAKUYA, SHAKUYA
SMILE.
ONCE IN A WHILE
EVEN FOR ME, IT'S A BIT OVERWHELMING
...AND NOW I'VE GOT THE MEMORY OF A SWORD RUNNING THROUGH MY BODY ON TOP OF IT.
NO WONDER I CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF BLOOD.
LIKE AN AFTER EFFECT?

Transcendence


THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TELL YOU
BUT THINGS ARE STILL MURKY
...WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER.
HERE!
HAHA! THAT'S CUTE
IS IT A TREASURE BOX?
YOU DIDN'T TEASE LIKE THIS -
THANKS
LET ME START...

PUT OUT THAT FIRE! WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ?!
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
EHHH ?!
BY DOING THIS.
Then,
FSSS
SHAKUYA ...
ANY POINTS I EARNED FROM YOU FIVE YEARS AGO, WIPE THE BOARD.
UH-UH!
DON'T!!
!!
FRET
FRET

About the Bonus Drama CD 3

The recording continued. But it was okay. Even though my eyes were out of focus, they worked fine. It was a blast sitting in on their performance. Their entire demeanors would change with the dialog. I was impressed that actors could bring so much to just one line of dialog.

I thought Shakuya's voice was so cute and it was great how the actors playing Lucien and Kuwan also did the voices for the tigers Lu and Ku, respectively.

Thank you, everyone, for letting me take part! And that's why I wanted to use this space.

NO, YOU DON'T.
Waaah!
THE LATTER, ESPECIALLY, YOU SHOULD TURN AWAY AT THE FRONT DOOR.
...AND KUWAN IS HANDSOME THERE, DISCERNING!
THE OLD LUCIEN WAS A GOOD BOY...

ANYWAY, I WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL THIS THING IS DISPOSED OF...
...WITH MY APOLOGIES TO YOU!
MY MEMORIES CAME BACK.
SWISH
TELL ME THE REASON!
FOR BURNING IT, YOU AT LEAST OWE ME...
...AN EXPLANATION!
EH...?
I WAS SURPRISED BY SOME THINGS...
...INCLUDING HOW I USED TO BE.
ANYWAY, UM...
...PRUDENCE DICTATES I DO THIS.

THIS IS SERIOUS.
HAVE YOU REPORTED THIS TO MY PARENTS OR YOUR FATHER?
NO, YOU'RE THE FIRST
REALLY...?
I'M STILL PROCESSING IT.
"I WAS LONGING TO SEE YOU"
I'LL GO NOW.
AH..
OKAY
HAVE YOU CALMED DOWN?
I MIGHT BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU SMILED.

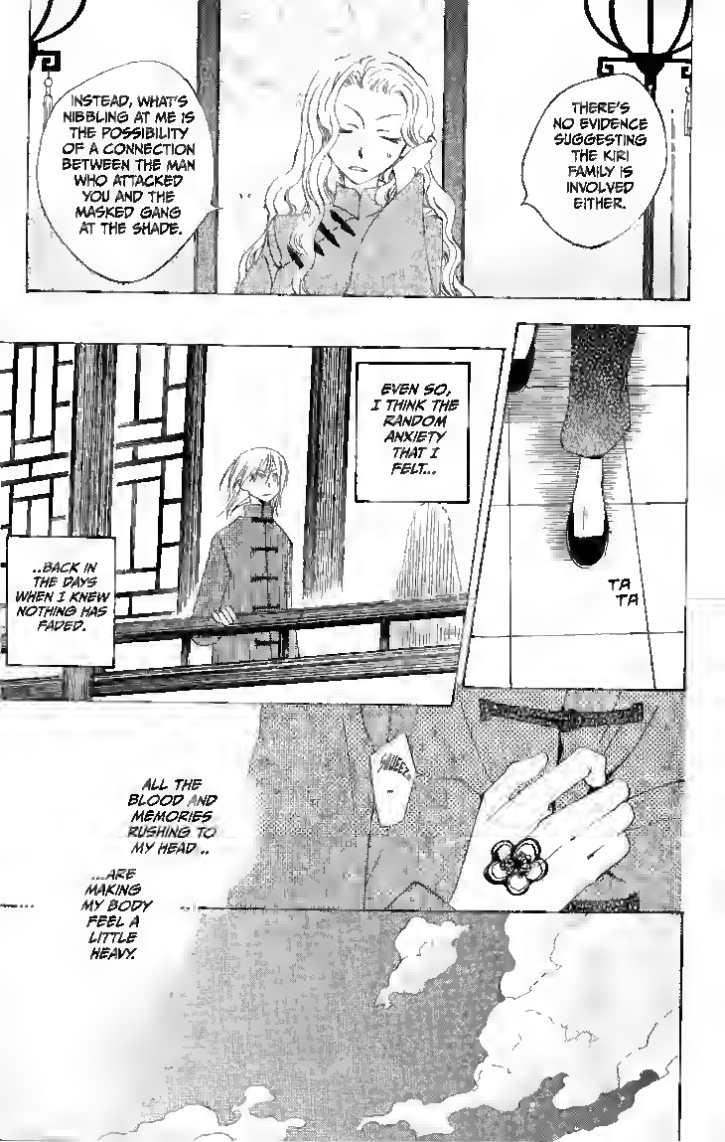
SMILE.
GRIII
WELL, IT'S BEEN FUN, ANYWAY.
THANKS.
KA-CHA!
HE GAVE UP ON ME!
WHAT IS A MAN WHO HAS YET TO BE ADOPTED INTO HIS BETROTHED'S FAMILY DOING HERE?
MASTER

YOUR MEMORIES...?
THEN PERHAPS YOU REMEMBER...
...WHAT HAPPENED THE NIGHT OF THE SANDSTORM, FIVE YEARS AGO.
I WAS LURED OUT OF THE PLACE WE WERE STAYING AT AND STABBED THROUGH THE CHEST WITH A SWORD.
IT SEEMS KILLING ME WAS THE PLAN.
I DON'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE...
...BUT I DID SEE THE FACE OF ONE OF THEM.
HMM...
AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO FEELS A LITTLE WEIRD TO BE TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING SERIOUS IN FRONT OF THE MASTER?
DON'T BE A FOOL! I'M THE ONE WHO FEELS WEIRD!

TO SUPPLEMENT YOUR STORY, LUCIEN, I'LL EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS.
AFTER HEARING RUMORS OF SANDSTORMS...
...I WENT TO THE OASIS OF THE CRESCENT MOON, WHERE I FOUND YOU DYING.
THE VILLAINS RESPONSIBLE HAD ALREADY LEFT, BUT I REALIZED RIGHT AWAY THAT YOU WERE WOUNDED BY A SWORD.
I WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT YOU HAD LOST YOUR MEMORIES.
BUT PERHAPS IT WAS A TRADEOFF, YOUR BURIED MEMORIES FOR A PASSION TO LEARN THE SWORD.
I USED THE ORB ON YOU...
...FOUGHT OFF THE URGE TO SEND YOU BACK HOME, AND DECIDED TO KEEP YOU WITH ME.
...
...
...

WHO DO YOU THINK...
..WOULD PROFIT FROM MY DEATH?
OFFICIALLY, YOU WERE LISTED AS A MISSING PERSON
WE HAD INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED, BUT THE CRIMINALS WERE NEVER CAUGHT
SPEAKING SIMPLY...
...I COULD MENTION THE PERSON WHO "PICKED UP" WHAT YOU LET DROP..
KUWAN.
THUMP
OR POSSIBLY THE KIRI FAMILY, WHICH SUPPORTS HIM.
HOW-EVER..

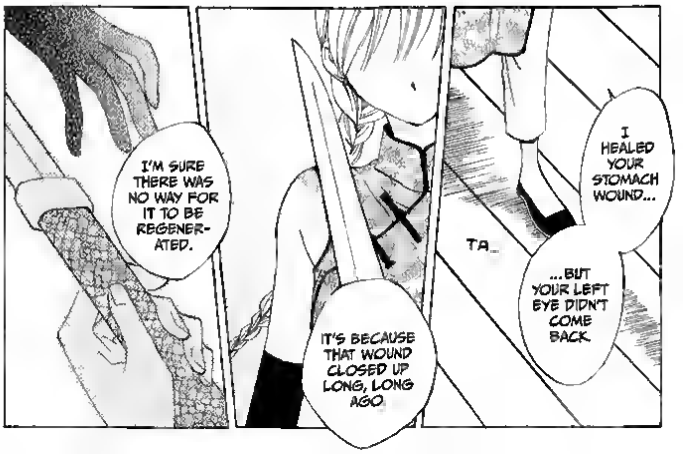
AND THAT'S WHY I USED THE ORB.
SEEING HIS ACTIONS THAT NIGHT FAIRLY WELL DISPELLED ANY DOUBTS I HAD ABOUT KUWAN.
...AT THE SHADE, KUWAN DISREGARDED DANGER TO PROTECT SHAKUYA.
AS A RESULT, HE RECEIVED A LIFE-THREATENING WOUND.
I HEAR THAT IF THE DRAGON ORB HADN'T BEEN THERE ...HE MIGHT NOT BE HERE NOW
ME TOO...
Whew
IT'S IRRITATING TO FEEL RELIEVED ABOUT IT, BUT...
YOU'RE GOOD AT DRAWING.
THAT'S YOUR REACTION?
FWISH FWISH
WHAT DID YOUR WOULD-BE MURDERERS LOOK LIKE?
THE MAN WHOSE FACE I SAW WAS YOUNG AND HAD SLANTED EYES. HE WAS OF AVERAGE HEIGHT.
THE OTHER MAN I SAW ALSO HAD SLANTED EYES AND ABOUT THE SAME BUILD, I THINK...
?
FWISH


THERE'S NO EVIDENCE SUGGESTING THE KIRI FAMILY IS INVOLVED EITHER.
INSTEAD, WHAT'S NIBBLING AT ME IS THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE MAN WHO ATTACKED YOU AND THE MASKED GANG AT THE SHADE.
EVEN SO, I THINK THE RANDOM ANXIETY THAT I FELT...
..BACK IN THE DAYS WHEN I KNEW NOTHING HAS FADED.
TA TA
WHEEL
ALL THE BLOOD AND MEMORIES RUSHING TO MY HEAD ..
...ARE MAKING MY BODY FEEL A LITTLE HEAVY.

Kyaa♥
THIS IS TO CELEBRATE YOUR RECOVERY! A BOUQUET OF BELL-FLOWERS!
IT'S BEEN TOO LONG SINCE I'VE SEEN YOU IN UNIFORM!
I'M SO HAPPY YOU'RE BACK TO FULL HEALTH.
MY WOUND HEALED BECAUSE OF YOU
KUWAN!
WELL, NOT EXACTLY ME...THE DRAGON ORB
Cut (rustle)
AREN'T YOU ONE AND THE SAME?
MMM.
IT IS YOURS, AFTER ALL.
Cut (rustle)

IT SCARES ME...
...HAVING A LOT OF POWER LIKE THAT.
Especially because it threatens to spill out...
YOU DON'T LIKE THAT?
SCARES YOU? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
BUT EVERYONE IS FUNDAMENTALLY THE SAME.
EVERY-ONE, NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE...
...BOTH KILLS AND BRINGS BACK TO LIFE OTHER PEOPLE.
YOU'VE MADE IT RAIN, MADE LIGHTNING STRIKE...
...USED YOUR CLAWS TO TEAR SOMEONE APART...
THE SAME HOW...?
I HAVEN'T TORN ANYONE APART YET! ONLY BROKEN A FEW RIBS...
...WITH WHAT'S IN THEIR HEART.

SHIK
THE AMOUNT OF THE POWER IS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE.
YES...
YOU'RE RIGHT.


I HEALED YOUR STOMACH WOUND...
TA
...BUT YOUR LEFT EYE DIDN'T COME BACK.
IT'S BECAUSE THAT WOUND CLOSED UP LONG, LONG AGO.
I'M SURE THERE WAS NO WAY FOR IT TO BE REGENERATED.

BUT IF THE DRAGON ORB AND I ARE THE SAME...
..I WANT TO HEAL IT
BECAUSE IT'S A MARK OF HONOR?
THAT'S OKAY
I DON'T MISS IT.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
THANK YOU FOR THE FLOWERS, LADY SHAKUYA.

WELL, WELL. WHAT SNAZZY BOOTS YOU HAVE.
JEALOUS?
CLING
LUCIEN!
TWITCH
I HEAR YOU'RE GOING BACK TO WORK..
KUWAN?
I WAS SHOCKED!
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME ANY OF THE DETAILS WHEN YOU CAME TO MY ROOM LAST NIGHT!
OUR MISTRESS TOLD ME THE WHOLE STORY
AND I HEAR THAT YOU GOT YOUR MEMORIES BACK?
YES.

HE CAME TO YOUR ROOM LAST NIGHT?
UH-HUH. THROUGH THE WINDOW
...
...
...
AH, TOO BAD ..
DO YOU ENJOY TEASING?
PERHAPS I SHOULD GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE?
DON'T TEASE ME!
THAT TICKS ME OFF, COMING FROM YOU.
THAT KIND OF THING ONLY WORKS FOR TWO PEOPLE WHO ARE PASSIONATELY IN LOVE.
LUCIEN, I SUPPOSE BOTH OF US HAVE HAD OUR LIVES SAVED BY LADY SHAKUYA
THAT'S FAIR, ISN'T IT?
I GUESS IT IS AT THAT.

WELL, LADY SHAKUYA ...
RUSTLE
...THANK YOU...
...FOR THE CONGRATULATORY FLOWERS.
SO THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED TO SAY!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE ME FLOWERS?
THUMP
AH...
UM...
ACTUALLY ...
...I PREPARED SOMETHING.

!!

WHEN YOU BURNED THAT LETTER...
...IT MADE ME THINK OF OUR PICNIC.
Yearning for?
THE SWEETS I'VE BEEN YEARNING FOR!!

!!

EVEN WHEN I HEARD ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU...
...THIS WAS THE ONLY THING THAT CAME TO MIND, OF WHAT I COULD DO FOR YOU.
EVEN THOUGH YOU MUST HAVE BEEN TARGETED BECAUSE OF YOUR CONNECTION TO ME...

CHEF, YOU DIDN'T MAKE THESE, DID YOU, TO TEACH ME A LESSON FROM WHEN I WAS A KID?
NO, THEY'RE LADY SHAKUYA'S CREATION, BUT. WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

FOO
boo
I...
SHAKUYA
...
IT'S JUST DESTINY FOR NEITHER OF US TO HAVE FULL CONTROL OVER OUR LIVES.
SO DON'T LOOK GLUM
YOU CAN JUST SAY, "YOUR LIFE IS IN MY HANDS."
COME ON, YOU'RE THE NEXT HEAD OF THE FAMILY DO YOU KNOW WHAT A LEADER NEEDS? CHARISMA
YOU'D BETTER... PROVE... YOURSELF...
THE WORDS ARE STICKING IN MY THROAT, LIKE WHEN I WAS A KID ...!!
GASP
Transcendence

MY POINT IS... DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
THANK YOU.
SHE SMILED..
SHE SMILED FOR ME.

BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
AHHH...
NOW THAT OUR GOOD CAPTAIN IS BACK, IT FINALLY FEELS LIKE I'M SHIPSHAPE.
YOU BETTER ALWAYS BE "SHIPSHAPE", EVEN WHEN HE'S NOT HERE!
CLOP
CLOP CLOP

RUMBLE
CHILDREN OR NOT, IF YOU WISH TO LIVE LONGER, YOU'LL HAVE TO LEARN TO PROTECT YOURSELVES. REMEMBER THAT.
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
DO NOT.. RUN INTO TRAFFIC AGAIN
THUMP THUMP
WAAAA
CLOP...
FREEZE
I GUESS WE'RE ALL SHIP-SHAPE
CLOP
CLOP...
GOOD
SWISH
U-UNDERSTOOD, SIR!

Episode 18: The End

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Transcendence- Welcome
to Scrulating Paradise!

Where your secrets...

Two Flowers for the Dragon

龍(りゅう)の花(はな)わずらい

Episode 19

STARE

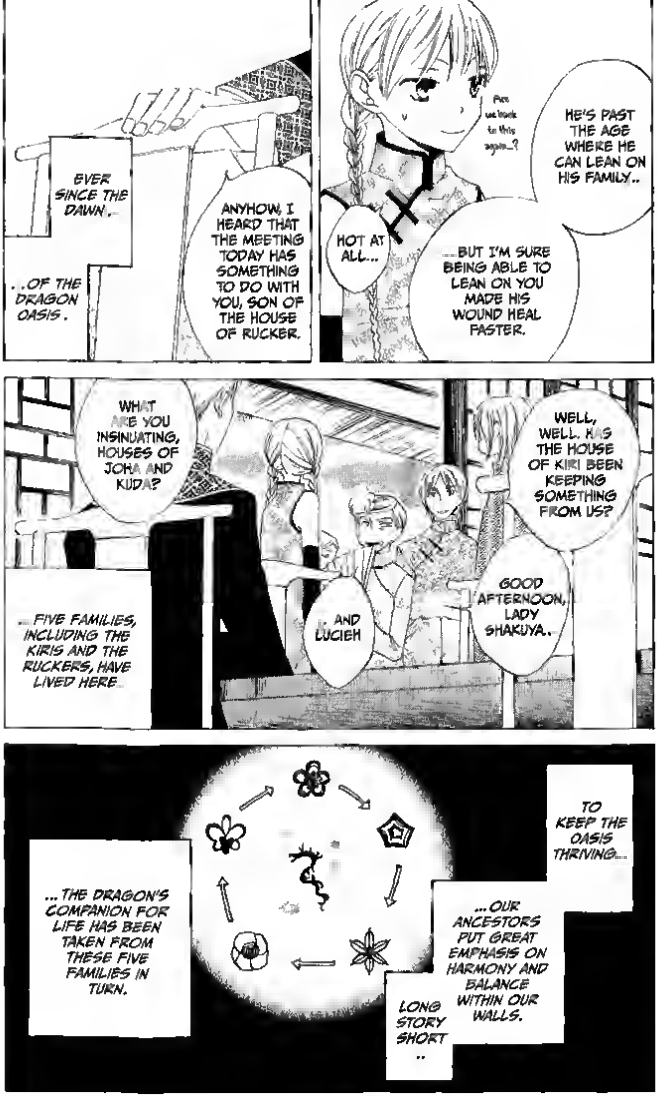
EXCUSE ME...
?!
YOU JUST DROPPED A DUMPLING INTO THE CHANNEL. DIDN'T YOU?
YOU CAN HAVE ONE OF MINE, IF YOU'D LIKE.
EH?
Y-YES, PLEASE!
WHEN I HEARD YOU GO, "OW!"...
BOING
DROP
...I TURNED AROUND AND SAW IT HAPPEN.
THESE DUMPLINGS ARE GOOD, TOO.

I KNOW THIS GIRL
SHE WORKS AT THE DRAGON SHRINE...
CHEW CHEW
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
I OFFERED, SO THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SHY.
THANK Y—
DUP
すってーん
CRASH!!
OH...
ばらばら
CLATTER
YOUR THINGS...!

WHEN SHE CALLED OUT TO ME, IT PUT ME ON GUARD FOR A MOMENT...
I have no reason to be nervous...
...BUT THERE'S NO WAY SHE COULD KNOW MY FACE.
I'LL HELP YOU.
THANK YOU...
WAA!
SWISH
THEY WENT IN THE CHANNEL, TOO!
SPLISH
SPLISH
SPLISH

Transcendence

I'M FAIRLY GOOD AT DRAWING, SO YES. IF YOU SAW HIM IN REAL LIFE NOW, YOU'D RECOGNIZE HIM.
ALTHOUGH HARDLY ANYONE KNOWS I'VE REGAINED MY MEMORIES YET.
WE SHOULD TELL LUPINA. SHE'S GOT A BUILT-IN "SUSPICIOUS RADAR".
WHERE IS LUPINA?
I HAVEN'T SEEN HER ALL DAY.
IT'S HER DAY OFF.
SHE'S PROBABLY OUT SHOPPING IN TOWN OR SOMETHING.
HUH...
Ah, thank you!
Here.
HELLO THERE SO YOU TWO ARE THE FIRST TO ARRIVE, EH?
MR. KIRI...
I OWE YOU THANKS FOR WHAT YOU DID FOR KUWAN, LADY SHAKUYA.

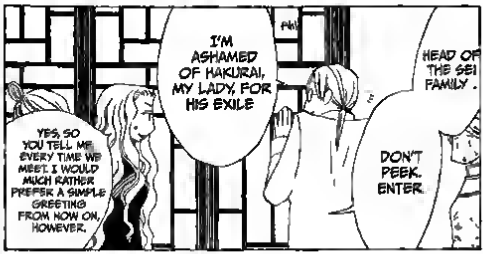

EVER SINCE THE DAWN..
..OF THE DRAGON OASIS.
ANYHOW, I HEARD THAT THE MEETING TODAY HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOU, SON OF THE HOUSE OF RUCKER.
Are we back to this again...?
HE'S PAST THE AGE WHERE HE CAN LEAN ON HIS FAMILY..
HOT AT ALL...
...BUT I'M SURE BEING ABLE TO LEAN ON YOU MADE HIS WOUND HEAL FASTER.
WHAT ARE YOU INSINUATING, HOUSES OF JOHA AND KUDA?
WELL, WELL. HAS THE HOUSE OF KIRI BEEN KEEPING SOMETHING FROM US?
...FIVE FAMILIES, INCLUDING THE KIRIS AND THE RUCKERS, HAVE LIVED HERE..
AND LUCIEH
GOOD AFTERNOON, LADY SHAKUYA..
...THE DRAGON'S COMPANION FOR LIFE HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM THESE FIVE FAMILIES IN TURN.
LONG STORY SHORT ..
...OUR ANCESTORS PUT GREAT EMPHASIS ON HARMONY AND BALANCE WITHIN OUR WALLS.
TO KEEP THE OASIS THRIVING...

FATHER.
SON, PERHAPS NO ONE IS MORE PLEASED THAT YOUR MEMORIES HAVE RETURNED THAN I AM.
FROM A LONG-TERM VIEW..
...IF YOUR FAMILY IS "UP" NEXT AND YOU WANT TO MOVE UP IN THE WORLD, IT MUST BE A CUSTOM OF IMMEASURABLE VALUE.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU, LUCIEN.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?
FOO
A RING? JADE?
EXACTLY. FEMALES LOVE JEWELRY.
GIVE IT TO LADY SHAKUYA FROM YOU.
OKAY.
GRIN

Jumping rope

Once in a while, I get the urge to jump rope. I can't really do it, but I enjoy the Zen monotony of practicing. It feels like I'm in training. As an adult, there's some resistance to the idea of hopping around alone, but it's a shame that people don't do it more, especially since it's a light exercise that only takes up one tatami mat of space. Instead, it seems people would rather fork out good money for the latest exercise gadgets in a mail-order catalog that also take up one tatami mat of space. Anyway, just a short rant from a lazy person who never goes to the gym where she's a member.

HE GAVE ME CANDY HE SAID THE PAWN-BROKER WOULD LIKE...
...AND SAID YOU AND I SHOULD BUY FOOD FOR THE TIGERS TOGETHER OR SOMETHING
WHAT DID YOUR FATHER SAY?


I'M ASHAMED OF HAKURAI, MY LADY, FOR HIS EXILE
HEAD OF THE SEI FAMILY.
YES, SO YOU TELL ME EVERY TIME WE MEET. I WOULD MUCH RATHER PREFER A SIMPLE GREETING FROM NOW ON, HOWEVER.
DON'T PEEK. ENTER.

NOW THAT THE FIVE DISTINGUISHED FAMILIES ARE HERE...
...LET US BEGIN THE MEETING.
I BELIEVE THERE'S SOME CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SANDSTORM AT THE CRESCENT MOON OASIS AND THE ONE AT THE SHADE.
LUCIEN RUCKER HAS REGAINED HIS MEMORIES.

ONE DAY, THE SEAT AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE...
...WILL BE MINE.
...WHO DO NOT SHARE HAPPY RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER
YES, MY LADY
FIRST, LET'S HEAR THE EXPLANATION FROM LUCIEN.
THE SYSTEM HAS KEPT THE DRAGON OASIS GOING ALL THIS TIME...
...BUT THE EXISTENCE OF THE DRAGON ORB HAS BEEN KEPT SECRET FROM THE FIVE FAMILIES ..
I'D BETTER START GROWING SOME MORE...

GLITTER
THESE ARE ADORABLE!
I'M ONLY SORRY WE COULDN'T RETRIEVE ALL OF THEM.
YES, BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, ONE WITHOUT A ROOF OVER HIS HEAD.
IF LADY SHAKUYA WERE HERE, FISHING THE REST OUT OF THE CHANNEL WOULD HAVE BEEN NO PROBLEM.
...IN HER DRAGON FORM.
ACTUALLY, I WORK AT THE SHRINE.
SO YOU'RE A HABER-DASHER.
REALLY?
WELL...
WHAT'S THE DRAGON PRINCESS LIKE?

RUSTLE
ROARRR
I APPLIED TO BE A HANDMAID WHEN I WAS TEN
AND WHEN I WENT TO THE SHRINE FOR AN INTERVIEW—
OH, DEAR.
LADY SHAKUYA HAS TRANSFORMED AGAIN!
LET'S HIDE, LIEFTINA. IT'S DANGEROUS WITH HER OUT HERE.
GRRRR
GULP!!
ぱくん!!
SHE SWALLOWED YOU ALIVE?!
GYAAA
AND THEN
AND THEN WHAT HAP-PENED?

TO KEEP FROM GOING ALL THE WAY DOWN THE HATCH, I HELD FAST TO HER TONGUE.
...AND PULLED!
DANGLE
ARE YOU HURT?!
LUPINA...
YOU DON'T SUDDENLY SWALLOW SOMEONE!!
I'M THORRY...
YOU PASS!!
THAT'S WHAT SHE'S LIKE.
A LITTLE WILD..
...AND A LITTLE MEEK.
SHE'S ALSO LIKE A LITTLE SISTER TO ME.

A TRAVELING HABER-DASHER HAS A MASTER..?
I'VE GOT SOMEONE LIKE THAT, TOO.
M-MY BOSS

THIS ONE AND THAT ONE, PLEASE.
IS THAT STRANGE?
EVEN THOUGH SHE'S YOUR MISTRESS?

NO... NOT STRANGE.
Thank you!

STRONG, OVER-BEARING
..AND SOMETIMES ACTS LIKE AN OGRE..
..BUT FAMILY TO ME
—PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN MY LIFE

THAT'S THE ONLY PLACE I CAN GO HOME TO.
IT MUST BE ROUGH FOR A HABER-DASHER, TOO.
Hh...
I won't try...
ALONG THOSE LINES...
THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING.
WELL, I'D BETTER BE GOING.
DON'T WANT TO GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR BUSINESS
THAT WAS FAST!
ARE YOU SURE IT'S OKAY?!
Eh?
YAY!
WITTER
PWISH
CLA
TTE
TAKE YOUR PICK, IF YOU'D LIKE.

Is she a heavy drinker?
I'M POOR THIS MONTH ...
...FROM BUYING TOO MUCH LIQUOR.
I WONDER ...
DON'T YOU THINK?
...IF ALL HANDMAIDS ARE LIKE THIS.
SO PEACEFUL...
HOW ABOUT THIS ONE?
IT ACCENTS THE COLOR OF YOUR HAIR.
IT BECOMES YOU.
YOU'D LOOK CUTE WITH IT.

LIKE I CAN TAKE THE PRAISE OF A MERCHANT SERIOUSLY.
UNLIKE LADY SHAKUYA...
...IT'S NOT MY LOT IN LIFE TO EXPERIENCE GIRLISH EXCITEMENT. STILL, THAT BEING SAID...
EXCELLENT CHOICE.
FLATTERER! BUT I WILL GO WITH THAT ONE.
VERY CUTE!
DOES IT LOOK CUTE?
RATTLE
CRASH
ARF!
WOOF! WOOF!
WELL...
I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT. THANK YOU
BOW
THANK YOU

WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
SOMEBODY, CATCH THEM!
THE DOGS I WAS GOING TO SELL GOT LOOSE!
I didn't do it!
SUDDENLY GOTTEN A LOT NOISIER AROUND HERE..
OWWW! LET GO!
GRRRR
THEY MUST BE SO EXCITED, THEY'LL BITE ANYONE!
TIME TO CLOSE UP SHOP
CALL FOR THE POLICE!
THEY'VE GOT TO BE ON PATROL AROUND HERE
RUSH

SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING HAPPENED ON THE MAIN STREET..
MAYBE A DISPUTE ...?
I HOPE THE HABER-DASHER DOESN'T GET INVOLVED.
HE'S ALREADY A KLUTZ. HE DOESN'T NEED ANY MORE TROUBLE ON TOP OF THAT.
HUFF!
WOOF
WOOF
DOGS?!
HUFF!
HUFF!
TA
TA
TA
TA
TA

STAY AWAY FROM ME!!
WHAT ARE DOGS DOING HERE?!
WOOF WOOF WOOF
AAAAAH!
I'M NOT GOOD AT RUNNING!
THIS IS A NIGHT-MARE!
THEY'RE GONNA CATCH UP TO ME!
SNAP!
THEY WANNA BITE ME!!
YIPE!
IF LADY SHAKUYA WERE HERE AT A TIME LIKE THIS, SHE'D BE ABLE TO INTIMIDATE THEM WITH ONE SNARL!!
DOGGG!

COMPARED TO THE MOUTH OF A DRAGON...
...DOGS' MOUTHS ARE NOTHING!!
HOW MANY YEARS HAVE I BEEN WITH LADY SHAKUYA..?
BUT WAIT A SECOND...
EXAGGERATION
AND I HAVE EXPERIENCE BRINGING HER DOWN.
I CAN SAY THAT, CAN'T I?
SPIN

STOP THEM JUST LIKE I WILL WITH LADY SHAKUYA!!
YAAAAAAA
RRRRAAA

NOPE, I CAN'T!!
H--
HELP ME?
I MEAN, HE'S THE TYPE OF MAN WHO TRIPS ON STAIRS...
THE HAND-MAID...
RUN!!
NO, I CAN'T ASK HIM TO DO THAT!

YIPE!
THUNK

SHLUCK
GRAB

SLUMP
WOW.!
IF YOU TAKE ONE STEP FORWARD...
...YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE A BOLD MOVE, OR ELSE IT GETS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS
HESITATION IS FORBIDDEN.
I SEE...
IN ANY CASE, I THINK IT WAS RECKLESS OF YOU TO FACE THEM.

WILL YOU..
THANK YOU
UM...
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
KUWAN!
EH? LUPINA?

NO, I'M FINE!
TWITCH
AH MORE DOGS HERE, TOO...
STARE
TWITCH
DID THEY BITE YOU?
THIS MAN SAVED...
...ME.
Huh?
HE HAPPENED TO BE PASSING BY...
I MEAN, I MET HIM BEFORE, BRIEFLY...
UH-HUH
...WAS SOMEONE HERE?
UM... UH-HUH. JUST A SECOND AGO, IN FACT...
I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME, THOUGH...

YOUR TEA, LADY SHAKUYA.
MY HEART'S FLUTTER-ING..
..COMPLETELY UNINTENTIONALLY!
BY THE WAY, SOMETHING KIND OF NICE HAPPENED TO ME YESTERDAY DO YOU WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT?
Eh?
WHAT?
YOU KNOW WHEN YOU EXPECT SOMEONE TO ACT ONE WAY AND THEY DO SOMETHING ELSE?
I MEAN, IT CAN TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY WHEN SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING UNEXPECTED.

SOMETHING ABOUT BEING CAUGHT OFF GUARD BECAUSE HIS ATTACKER SEEMED TO BE A KLUTZ AT FIRST.
LUCIEN SAID IT?
YEAH LUCIEN WAS SAYING SOMETHING ALONG THE SAME LINES AT THE MEETING YESTERDAY.
A KLUTZ...?! WHAT WAS THE TOPIC?

YOU WOULDN'T THINK IT, BUT IT'S THE LIKENESS OF A VERY BAD MAN.
LADY SHAKUYA
THAT'S...

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Two Flowers for the Dragon
龍の花わずらい
Episode 20

AND THIS MAN WAS AN ACCOMPLICE OF THE WOULD-BE ASSASSIN.
ACTUALLY, LUCIEN'S MEMORIES CAME BACK
EH?!
HE SAID THE WOUND THAT CAUSED HIS AMNESIA IN THE FIRST PLACE.
...WAS A SWORD THROUGH THE CHEST.. AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT!
EHHH?!
SHOCKING, ISN'T IT?
I'LL SAY..
IT LOOKS LIKE THE MAN I MET YESTERDAY..!

NO...IT COULDN'T BE THE SAME GUY, COULD IT? THEY JUST LOOK SIMIL... WHY, I HAVE SLANTED EYES, TOO.
HE ATTEMPTED TO ASSASSINATE LUCIEN?!
BUT COME TO THINK OF IT, THE SMART WAY HE CARRIED HIMSELF, HE DIDN'T SEEM LIKE YOUR AVERAGE STREET VENDOR.
THE MAN WHO HELPED ME OUT OF A PINCH?!

REALLY?

LATER ON, WE'RE GOING TO INFORM EVERYONE AT THE SHRINE ABOUT THIS.
I'm sure they'll all be surprised.

LADY SHAKUYA...
UM...
DID A MISCREANT MAKE MY HEART THROB...?!

FIRST, THE POLICE ARE GOING TO USE THAT SKETCH TO PRINT WANTED POSTERS.
I TAKE IT THEY'RE GOING TO POST THEM ON EVERY MAJOR STREET IN TOWN
YES. WE'LL MAKE A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT SIMULTA-NEOUSLY.
AS SOON AS IT'S READY. .
ARE YOU GOING TO TELL PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE SHRINE ...?
LIKE PEOPLE IN TOWN ?
AS SOON AS IT'S READY?
THUMP
AFTER ALL, THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THAT THE CRIMINAL HAS BEEN AT THE DRAGON OASIS BEFORE
CAPTURE HIM...
That way, I can prove myself
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S AFTER OR ANYTHING ABOUT HIM...
...BUT IF POSSIBLE, I WANT TO CAPTURE HIM WITH MY OWN HANDS.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU WERE STARTING TO TELL ME ABOUT SOMETHING GOOD THAT HAPPENED TO YOU YESTERDAY. SO WHAT WAS IT?
EH?!
THUMP

WHAT'S WRONG, LUPINA? YOU'VE SUDDENLY GONE QUIET.
...
...
...

THAT LOOKS CUTE ON YOU, BY THE WAY.
"IT ACCENTS THE COLOR OF YOUR HAIR."
"IT BECOMES YOU."
WHERE'D YOU BUY IT?
THIS ...?

IT'S A SECRET.
I KNOW THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE ME.
TA
TA
TA
TA
HE'S NOT HERE...
HUFF
HUFF

TO
SS
CHEW
CHEW
HE MAY HAVE ALREADY LEFT THE OASIS...
IF HE IS STILL HERE, THOUGH, I WANT TO MEET HIM ONE MORE TIME!
BUT IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE TO PICK ANYONE OUT OF THIS CROWD!
TWITCH
CRASH
THERE HE IS ...!!
Hey, you really shouldn't be throwing your banana peels in the street!

Great...
DID YOU DROP YOUR MERCHANDISE AGAIN?
THE HANDMAID...
MY NAME IS LUPINA.

WHEN I TURNED AROUND YESTERDAY, YOU WERE GONE
THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME.

Glasses

For a long time, strong eyesight was my best point, but it seems to have weakened all of a sudden. I'm thinking it's because I play video games and use the internet too much, especially for someone my age. "If I act now, maybe I can get my vision back", I think to myself, which is why my new hobby is squinting up at the stars outside at night.
I've always wanted to wear glasses, but now that I'm actually worried about my vision, I never want to put them on. It's egotism is what it is. From now on, I'm going to be kinder to my eyes.

See you at the end of the volume!

I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF RUNNING AN ERRAND.
I'M GLAD I RAN INTO YOU.
THIS MAN TRIED TO HAVE LUCIEN...
ARE YOU OFF DUTY TODAY, TOO?
BECAUSE I WANTED TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE
WHY?
HMPH...
AND YET...
YOU POSSESS A STRONG SENSE OF DUTY.

I KNOW I'VE SAID IT'S NOT IN THE CARDS FOR ME TO GET ALL SKITTISH OVER SOMEONE..
THIS PLACE'S STEAMED BUNS ARE GOOD
LET ME TREAT.
..BUT FOR THIS MAN, THE ENEMY OF MY MISTRESS, I..
SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG WITH ME...
...RUNNING ALL OVER TOWN, LOOKING FOR HIM BEFORE SOMEBODY NABS HIM.

ARE YOU ON A DATE?
THESE ARE PERFECT DATE SNACKS.
TH-THANK YOU
GLANCE
THREE BUNS, PLEASE.

ACTUALLY, SINCE YOU'RE A TRAVELING SALESMAN, I WASN'T SURE YOU'D STILL BE IN TOWN TODAY.
HOW LONG ARE YOU PLANNING TO STAY?
I GUESS IT DEPENDS ON THE CUSTOMERS.
AH...
THEY COMPLI-MENTED IT.
WAS THAT A META-PHOR?
WHAT DO PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THE HAIR ORNAMENT?

How many times have the nutcrackers fallen?
Ah!
CLATTER
CRASH
THAT'S RIGHT. IT TOOK A LOT OF TIME, MAKING EACH ONE BY HAND..
Eh?
THIS IS HOMEMADE?!
I'M GLAD
THEN IT WAS WORTH MAKING.
BEING WITH LADY SHAKUYA...
...the tray fell over, too.
I did, but...
You should work with your books on top of a tray
YOU BOB UP AND DOWN OVER TRIVIAL MATTERS...
...AND LOOK A LITTLE STUPID TO OTHER PEOPLE.
...HAS ALWAYS MADE ME THINK...
...THAT LOVE IS A PAIN IN THE BUTT.

...HAS MADE ME GENUINELY HAPPY.
BUT THIS MINOR ENCOUNTER...
THIS SILLY EXCHANGE...
DOES IT MEAN I'VE FOUND LOVE...
...IN THIS MAN?

HE MIGHT NOT EVEN BE ALLOWED TO TELL ME HIS REAL NAME.
BUT I CAN'T EVEN ASK HIS NAME
HERE, BEFORE IT GETS COLD.
THANK YOU.
GO AHEAD.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO BUY FOR ME
I WONDER HOW OLD HE IS..

SHE SAID SHE WANTED TO CATCH YOU WITH HER OWN HANDS.
RATTLE
ZZ OR ZAP
SWISH
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
NO, NOTHING.
..I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO LADY SHAKUYA.
CHEW CHEW
LICK

...BUT I SERVED YOU AN ANESTHETIC.
CRASH!
SLUMP...

NICE JOB BEING AN UNDERCOVER DECOY, LUPINA.
And I'm Ginga.
Ta-daaa! I'm actually Kaitaro.
THANK YOU FOR COOPERATING WITH THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.
SHAKUYA SAID SHE WANTED TO "CAPTURE HIM WITH HER OWN HANDS"?
THOSE WORDS WARM MY HEART.
FWISH
LUCIEN RUCKER...?

BRAVO, LUPINA.
THIS IS HIM, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.
ONE OF THE MEN WHO TRIED TO TAKE MY LIFE FIVE YEARS AGO.
I SEE ..
SO YOUR MEMORIES CAME BACK...
INSTEAD OF WANTED POSTERS..
.. WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE MORE EFFICIENT TO USE ME AS A DECOY AND HAVE PLAINCLOTHES OFFICERS AROUND.
Lady Shakuya's staying home at the shrine.
HUH.

THUP
AND HERE I WAS CONVINCED THAT YOU LIKED ME...
HUH?
WHA--?!

STAY BACK OR THIS GIRL'S DEAD!
Y—
YOU'RE NOT NUMB?!
NOW I'M GLAD I PICKED UP THE ONES I BOUGHT MYSELF FROM OFF THE GROUND.

THEN YOU DIDN'T EAT MINE ...?!
THAK!
TAK
THEY WERE STILL GOOD, EXCEPT FOR THE LITTLE BIT OF SAND I GOT IN MY TEETH.
NO WAY HE'S GETTING AWAY!
FWISH
MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T HAVE USED A DECOY...
CHIK

THEY'RE DUAL-PURPOSE.
THAT'S NOT HOW YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO USE THEM!

AAAAAH!

AND SOME OF THE ORNAMENTS CAN ALSO BE USED AS WRITING INSTRUMENTS, WHICH WOULD MAKE THEM TRIPLE-PURPOSE
YOU'RE NOT ONLY A KLUTZ, YOU'RE A FOOL, TOO?!
ARE YOU GOING TO KILL ME?

OH, NO. I JUST NEED TO BORROW YOU AS A HOSTAGE UNTIL I CAN MAKE A CLEAN GETAWAY
RRR!
FWIT

NATURAL BEHAVIOR FOR A HANDMAID, ISN'T IT?
ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU HINK OF YOUR MASTER AS A ITTLE SISTER
REALLY?
EVEN THOUGH I TRIED TO CAPTURE YOU?
TA
TA
I LIKE PEOPLE WHO DON'T EASILY BETRAY..
.. THEIR "FAMILY".
HIS STEPS ARE SURE.
TA
BECAUSE YOUR "FAMILY" TOLD YOU TO COME?
WHAT IS HE AFTER?
I'VE BEEN TO THIS OASIS A NUMBER OF TIMES.
TUN
TUN

TING
FOO
LADY SHAKUYA WOULD GRIEVE TERRIBLY IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO THIS HANDMAID, SO.
KUWAN!
...KUWAN!

EVEN THOUGH, WITH THE GLASSES AND WHITE COAT, IT'S THE SAME COSTUME AS A PART-TIME WORKER AT A FOOD STALL?
TING
BY THE WAY, THIS OUTFIT IS SUPPOSED TO MAKE ME LOOK LIKE A TOWN DOCTOR.
NOW GET OUT OF MY WAY!
I'LL KILL THE GIRL!
NEITHER IS GOING TO HAPPEN.
I DON'T THINK I'VE SEEN KUWAN GO UP AGAINST SOMEBODY AS STRONG AS THIS BEFORE...
HE'S GOOD WITH A SWORD.

FOO
EH?
CHIK
THERE HE IS!
KYAAA!
SHOVE
HALT!

UWAAA!
CLOP
CLOP
FWOOSH
CLOP
CLOP
SNAP

REGRETTABLE. I'LL HAVE TO WRITE UP AN INCIDENT REPORT.
GROAN
WE BOTCHED IT.
CLOP CLOP
CLOP!
GET BACK HERE!
LUPINA, ARE YOU OKAY?
AH... YES

QUICKLY PREPARE THOSE WANTED POSTERS.
YES, SIR.
HE'S A WANTED CRIMINAL
YESTERDAY'S LINGERING MEMORY...
HAS BEEN CRUSHED INTO PIECES
...HAS HE BEEN ON MY MIND?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT MYSELF
WHY, EVER SINCE YESTERDAY...

TAP!
YOU'RE BACK LATER THAN EXPECTED...
.. KIKOKU
I APOLOGIZE MY SCHEDULE WAS THROWN OFF
WHAT ABOUT THE MESSAGE?
I HAVE IT, AMARANTH.

Episode 18 Preview Cut

I know I put Kuwan in black outfits a lot, but this drawing is like all black! You've gotta start dressing more colorfully, Kuwan!

Episode 19 Preview Cut

While drawing the layout, I thought the bottom of the drawing was going to be cut off anyway, so I just extended Lucian's top which resulted in a marvelous long T-shirt.

Episode 20 Preview Cut

I drew this after a friend and I finally followed through on our much-talked about plan to go to Okinawa and challenge ourselves with snorkeling someday.
But the way it turned out, we had to sit in on a lecture first, and by the time we were finally able to hit the open sea, we found that we missed the boat we had reservations for. And so, after flitting amongst the fish just off the beach for a while, our first foray into snorkeling was over.
But I think that was perfect for our skill level.

Transcendence

This may be the last one.

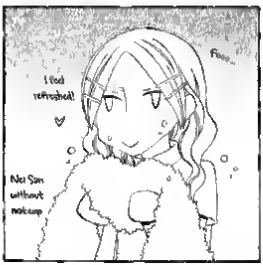
NO.
DATE 2006-2007

Kusakawa Notes

About each episode

Episode 15

After looking at the breakdowns for this episode, my editor was under the impression that Kwan got two kisses out of Shakuya. Even in the summary for episode 16 (published in the magazine), my editor wrote that the "convalescing Kwan kissed Lady Shakuya (twice)"



Episode 16

Lucian's fans went from sending me an outpouring of missives saying, "Please don't be so hard on Lucian" to the exact opposite, "Please give Lucian a harder time." In the Taiwanese version of this book, Nai San (really, "older sister" or "young woman" in Japanese) is referred to as "Rokara" (or "Tough Road") Right on the nose.

Episode 17

What are you, a southpaw? No, right? You're right-handed, like most people! So draw me correctly! I hold chopsticks in my right hand, got it? My right hand!

Near the end, there's a close-up on Lucian's tattoo, but I put it on his left hand. This was pointed out to me after the magazine was published. I'm fixing it now for this volume. I make this mistake a lot.

Episode 18

In the title page art for this episode, the fictional animal at the head of the hose that Shakuya is holding was modeled on a promotional spout that came with every large can of a certain beer a long time ago (the same animal is the beer company's logo). I loved the look of the head of that animal.

Episode 19

For the crests of the five families, you already know about the roses and bellflowers. The others are the Lily (Kuda family), the Poppy (Tohne family) and the Orchid (Sai family). I know, you can't tell what they are just from the pictures. The head of the Sai family is Hakuran's older brother.

Episode 20

This second of a two-part story is all about Lupine and Kikoku, so I thought I'd at least put the two fiancés on the title-page art. The title-page blurb (in the magazine) went, "The Ocean's Wind God & Lightning God?!" I guess Lucian is the wind and Kuwan is the lightning. Like in the legend, here's Kuwan, coming to get a bellybutton. Scary.

I'm sorry that I'm unable to reply, but if you'd like to share your thoughts about "Two Powers", by all means, please send them to:

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My website, with announcements about my work, etc, is:
(Lotus position)
http://lotusbar.jp/
(current as of December 2007)

2000 06

I want to thank all of you for reading this, my editor, the publishing company and the stores for stocking this; Kaoru Sashi-sama; Eiku Yumitsuki-sama; my family, relatives and friends; and the liquor store that lets me make my copies.
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SHOCKING REVELATIONS COMING IN OCTOBER!

By Neri Kusakewa. Things are heating up between Shakuya and Kuwen. Her tattoo is bigger than ever and the two are lip locking again! Poor Lucien. It seems he has counted himself out of the courtship completely. But everything might just take an unexpected turn. When explosive secrets are revealed who will Shakuya be able to turn to? Is there anyone she can trust anymore?!

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